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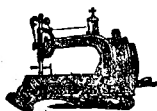
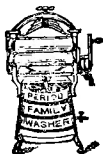
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THE
WRONGED DAUGHTER;

OR,

A WIFE'S INTRIGUE.

BY
NED BUNTLINE.

LONDON.
THE GENERAL PUBLISHING COMPANY,
280, STRAND, W.C.

THE
WRONGED DAUGHTER;
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CHAPTER I.

It was thirty years ago. The Fifth Avenue was "nowhere," and nobody lived there. Brown-stone fronts or marble veneering did not act as a show card of upper-tendom. Many of our first families lived in the old-fashioned, Knickerbocker, red-brick dwellings, which are giving way, or have given way, to the palace-like stores of our merchant-kings, who are elbowing all dwellers up-town, up-town, all the time.

In one of that kind of red-brick houses—a large one, three-storied, and not confined to "twenty-five feet front and eighty back"—lived one of the most important characters in my story. Lived! He did not merely exist, as some people do, now-a-days. For Mr Martin Grossbeak was wealthy, dressed well, fed well and drank well. Sometimes, indeed, he took so much wine after dinner, that his head became lighter than his heels, and his heels lighter than they ought to be, so that he could

scarcely keep them to the floor until they carried him to a couch where he could dream himself sober. But never away from home did he commit such a folly; never did he look through a tumbler in the foreground of a bar—never! He was too dignified for that.

He had begun life as a cabin-boy at sea; risen by his own exertions and merit to the position of a captain; being saving and lucky, he had become owner; from that he had turned his back upon the ocean, and, as a merchant, made an immense fortune, the interest of which was more than he required in the support of his elegant establishment in Bleecker Street.

He was now near sixty years of age. But he did not look so old by twenty years. His hair was hardly grey; his complexion was florid; not a wrinkle could be seen upon his ample brow. His manner was stern and peremptory, just as it had been when he trod upon the quarter-deck of his own ship. His servants had to obey all orders, and promptly too, or else they went their way out of his house in a hurry. Yet under all this stern and often rough exterior, there was a thick layer of genuine humanity—of real good-heartedness. But he hated to have any one know it. He would drive a beggar from the door, empty-handed, if the world was looking on; but would follow the same beggar to his hovel, if he had one, to give him food or clothe him.

After he had grown well enough off to think he could afford it, he had married. His wife, at best a sickly creature, lived only long enough to present him with a daughter—dying while

her baby was but a day or two old. A nurse was provided for the wee mite of life—a good, honest Irish woman, who had just lost her husband and an infant in the “cholera-time.”

While he was in business, Mr Grossbeak did not pay much attention to his child, though she grew up strong, healthy, and very beautiful, under the fostering care of Biddy Megann, her nurse. He merely furnished the money for her dresses and toys, and, as she grew old enough, employed a teacher to learn her the first branches of her education.

When he retired from business, at last, as wealthy as he wished to be, Lizzie—he named her after her mother—was sixteen years of age, and, for a motherless girl, very well bred; for she had been, for the last four years, under the care of a most excellent and lady-like governess, Mrs Laforce—a widow, who, from affluent circumstances, had been reduced to her present position.

And now that he had nothing else to do, Mr Martin Grossbeak began to love his daughter, to doat upon her beauty, to see her talent, and to think all the world could not produce her equal.

In this opinion he was firmly backed by Biddy Megann, her old nurse, who had been retained ever since she held poor little Lizzie at her breast.

Lizzie, we have said, was pretty. She had a wealth of glossy brown curling hair—very large blue eyes, shaded by lashes darker than her hair, and very soft and long. Her features were arch and expressive; her colour very fine;

her mouth faultless, inside and out; her figure very superb for one of her age. She could have passed for eighteen or twenty, though so much younger.

It was thirty years ago. Mr Grossbeak, who was a very early riser, had just sat down in his library, to have a quiet smoke before breakfast, when one of his men-servants, an Englishman, came rushing into the room, with a basket in his hands, exclaiming, "My heyes, master! what a go! My heyes, master! what a go!"

"What is the matter, John? What have you there?" asked Mr Grossbeak, almost dropping his pipe in surprise at John's excited manner.

"A basket, sir, that I found when I hopened the front door, just now!" replied John.

"A basket at my front door, John? What is in it?" asked Mr Grossbeak, rather nervously for him, laying his pipe down upon the table.

"Two hinfants, sir—two tiny hinfants, a sleepin' like a pair of hangels, sir."

Mr Grossbeak's red face turned almost white as he rose and looked at the contents of the basket.

"Babies left at my door!" he muttered in a voice like low thunder. "John, you scoundrel! what did you bring 'em in here for? Why didn't you send for a watchman and have them carried to the poor-house?"

Before poor John could utter a word in self-defence, Lizzie Crossbeak came in to give her father his daily kiss.

"What is the matter, father, dear?" she asked, noting his angry look and manner.

"Matter? Matter? Look in that basket, and see what has been left at my door."

"O, the little dears! How sweet! how beautiful!" cried the warm-hearted girl.

"Take the brats away, John—take 'em away!" cried Mr Grossbeak, in utter disgust.

"Father—dear father! let Lizzie say a word—wont you?"

"Yes, yes! What do you want, pet?" said the old gentleman, a little mollified.

"Don't be in such haste with these little waifs. I was a helpless baby once, father."

"So you was, darlint, and it was Biddy Megann—and that's meself—took care of ye," cried a fourth voice upon our little stage.

"Look in the basket, Biddy," said Lizzie.

"The howly Vargin bless us!" cried Biddy, as she did so. "They look as if they'd just dropped down from up above. Sure, they're wakin' up!"

"You will not send them upon the world's charity—will you, my dear, good father?"

And Lizzie kissed her father's stern brow.

"Poor things—they're hungry!" said Biddy, taking one up on each of her great fat arms, "And wonder upon wonders—they're twins by size, but the eyes of one is blue as the sky in June—and the other has black eyes!"

"Take 'em down into the kitchen and give 'em something to eat, and I'll see what is best to do with them afterward!" said Mr Grossbeak, as he gently pushed Lizzie down into a chair by his side.

"Let me see what is on this paper in the basket," said Lizzie, taking up a small note which, though neatly folded, bore no superscription. And she reads its contents aloud:

"Mr Grossbeak, you are rich! The care of these poor babes will not impoverish you. They are the children of misfortune—but not of sin! The unhappy mother who entrusts them to your care was lawfully married. Now, they are fatherless, and she is helpless. Take care of them; and one who daily and nightly will pray, on her bended knees, for God to bless you, will some day come to claim them, if she lives. They have been christened in church; the boy is named Norman G——; the girl, Eliza G——. Their full names I cannot give just now. Do not turn them away. A mother's half-broken heart pleads for them. "ELLEN G."

The voice of Lizzie was broken by sobs before she got through, and tears were rolling down her cheeks.

"Father, you will not turn them away, will you?" she sobbed.

"No, child, no. Go with Biddy and see them cared for. I suppose a wet-nurse will have to be hired."

"Yes, dear father." And Lizzie kissed Mr Grossbeak again and again; and taking up the basket, she followed Biddy out of the room.

"Poor things! poor things!" said Mr Grossbeak to himself, now that he was alone. "God help the poor mother whose misery has forced her to part with her babes. She must know me, or she would not trust in me so. Well, she

shall not be disappointed. They shall be taken care of—as kindly as if they were of my own blood.”

CHAPTER II.

QUITE as rich, but a thousand times more grasping, was one Levi Martin, a merchant, who traded in the same block on South-street with Grossbeak, before the retirement of the latter. Rich as he was, Mr Martin had no idea of retiring, so long as he could add to his immense capital. He had ships on almost every sea, and agents in all trading countries.

His dwelling was not in Bleecker-street. He had not yet got so far up town. In a little two-storey brick-house, on Pearl-street, plainly furnished, much to the annoyance of his young second wife, who had married his wealth and not his person, he lived comfortably, but far from luxuriously.

By his first wife, he had two children. One, Edgar, the son, was now away at sea, on an East India voyage; already the first officer of a ship, though but eighteen years of age; not because his father was owner. but because he was a thorough sailor.

The daughter was two years older, and not at home. Within less than a month after her father brought home his young bride—that bride, artful, venomous, too, as a reptile—had made home so unhappy to the poor girl, that she fled away, no one knew whither.

The father grieved much at first; but when his wife hinted that a low and unworthy attach-

ment had caused the sudden disappearance of his child, he believed her ; and he closed his heart to sorrow, and went back to his ledgers again, and in business sought to bury every care.

How he had come to leave his business long enough to woo and win a second wife, was a mystery to those who best knew him. Not to those who knew her, or a designing, unscrupulous woman whom she called mother.

The truth was, he had no wooing to do at all. Mrs Desha, the mother of his wife, did all of that part of the business. She got an introduction to Mr Martin, he hardly knew how, or who it was that introduced her ; but she was introduced as a wealthy widow from the West ; and, after the introduction, she called frequently, very frequently, upon him, to ask how she had better invest certain funds, or with some other plausible excuse. And she always brought her daughter Minna, with her ; and Minna, assisted by paints and pomades, was quite a fine-looking girl. And, then, her mother said she was such a steady, discreet girl, so unlike other young folks, that, almost insensibly, Mr Martin began to notice her. And, when, at last, after many manœuvres, Mrs Desha actually told the old merchant that Minna had been so foolish as to fall in love with him, the fool believed it, and within a week after he was married to her ; for Mrs Desha believed in " striking while the iron was hot ; " especially in shackling her daughter to the hand and wealth of Mr Martin.

One year after his marriage, and eleven months, after the disappearance of his daughter,

it was announced to Mr Martin that he was the father of a fine boy. Mrs Martin, after a very brief illness, made her appearance, as usual, at his breakfast table, and on every occasion had the infant presented to his view. The "very image of his father," she declared it to be.

As it had dark hazel eyes (and his were blue); as it began to show red hair, and his in youth had been a dark brown, the colour now of the wig which she had made him buy, it was hard to see how he was imaged in its little, pug-nosed squab face; but she said so; and she ought to know.

About a month or six weeks after the birth, or appearance of the infant just alluded to, Mr Martin received information that the "Heliotrope," the ship in which his son had sailed as first officer, was signaled from Sandy Hook. It was early in the day when he received the news; and as tugboats were not then so generally used as now, it was night before she was reported "up," and at anchor off the docks. A six months' healthy voyage had enabled her to pass quarantine without detention.

Edgar Martin had been absent nearly two years; and when he entered his father's counting-room to report the ship in, the old gentleman turned away from his ledger, and looked with a glance of pride upon the fine, manly form which stood before him—on the bronzed, but comely face of his son.

"Well, father, what is the news at home? How is sister?" asked the young man, as soon as he had made his report.

The old gentleman turned ghastly white.

when the question reached his ears. At last he stammered:

"I've been married since you left home, Edgar!"

"Ah, then I shall have a new mother to greet when I go home," said the young man, cheerfully. "How does sister like her?"

"Your sister is away from home!" he said.

"Where is she?" asked Edgar.

"I do not know!" said the old man, with hesitation. "She got mad with Minna and left. I've heard since that she married some low nobody."

"Who is Minna?" asked the young man, sternly.

"My new wife. Where are you going, Edgar?"

"To look after my sister, sir," said the son, in a freezing tone. And, turning on his heel, he left the counting-room, without uttering another word.

CHAPTER III.

MR GROSSBEAK was glad that he had not had the two little infants sent to the poor-house, when his daughter met him with a smiling face at the breakfast table, and told him that the two babes had been fed plentifully on some warm milk.

And he was yet happier when, just before dinner, his daughter had them brought up to him in his library, which was his favourite sitting-room. They looked so cozy and nice in their new nurse's arms; they had been washed

and dressed neatly, and really looked pretty—reminding him how his Lizzy looked when she was a child.

“Did you ever see purtier little cratur, sir?” said Biddy Megann, as she with the freedom of an old and valued servant, followed her young mistress into the room.

“They are handsome. How old do you think they are, Biddy?” asked Mr Grossbeak.

“Faith, sir, ’twould be hard to say so near as a day or a week; but they can’t be far from a month or six weeks, poor things.”

“Strange! twins, as they must be, that one should have black and the other blue eyes?” said he, musingly.

“Had we not better save the note which came with them?” asked Lizzie. “It may serve at some future day to identify the poor mother who has been forced to part with them.”

“Certainly. It is already put away in my iron chest,” said Mr Grossbeak.

“Here are two other articles which I found in the basket,” continued Lizzie, holding up a handsome diamond ring, and a brooch with an oval in the centre, and a circlet of rubies around it.

Mr Grossbeak took the articles of jewellery, and examined them closely. The name “Ellen” was engraved on the inside of each.

“This is a strange mystery,” said Mr Grossbeak. “I would give a great deal to fathom it. I wish the mother had come to me openly with the babes; she and they should have had protection and kindness without the misery of a separation.”

"You are a good, dear father," said Lizzie; and winding her arms about his neck, she seated herself on his lap, as she often did.

"We will take these jewels away with the note," said he. "They may yet serve to trace the poor mother. She must have been in good circumstances at some time, to have worn such costly jewels."

"Yes. The wording of her note and the delicate handwriting, both bespeak her to be of more than ordinary cultivation," said Lizzie.

"Well, my good child, you must fill her place for the poor babes," said Mr Grossbeak.

CHAPTER IV.

"THERE, take the brat away—I am sick of the sight of it, Ellen; and then go around to the circulating library in Franklin-square, and get me the second volume of this novel."

These words were uttered by Mrs Martin, *née* Desha, and spoken to a slouchy-looking servant-girl, who held in her arms the "image of its father," which we have alluded to.

The servant took "the brat" away; and Mrs Martin arose, and, going to the front window, looked out upon the street.

"What a nice young man! Dear me, he is positively handsome!" she said to herself as a tall and fine-looking person crossed the street in front of the house. "Mercy! he is coming here, and I am in a calico morning-gown!" she added, as she saw him open the front gate and enter the yard with hurried steps.

She started to leave the room, intending to

dress herself in better style before being seen by the good-looking stranger.

But she had not time; for, with what seemed to her to be a strange familiarity, he had entered the house without knocking, and now confronted her as she was about leaving the parlour.

"Do I address Mrs Martin?" he asked.

"I am Mrs Martin," she said.

"Be pleased to sit down, madam," he continued; "I have a few questions to ask you."

The lady drew back and took a seat, rather haughtily pointing him to another.

"Before saying more, I may as well introduce myself. My name is Edgar Martin."

"Ah—my husband's son! You are very welcome home from sea," said the lady.

"My first question is, What made my sister leave this house?" he continued.

"A question which only herself can answer," said Mrs Martin, colouring in spite of her attempt to retain her self-possession.

"As she is not here, I must learn what I can of you, madam," he continued. "Did she have any quarrel with you before she left?"

"I deny your right, sir, to question me," said Mrs Martin, almost angrily. "If you are not impertinent, I will respect you as my husband's son. If you are—"

She hesitated.

"Well, madam, finish what you intended to say."

"I intended to say, that if you cannot treat me with the respect which is due my station, if

not to me as a lady, the same door through which your sister passed out into the world is open for you."

"Woman—I cannot call you lady—will you tell me where my sister can be found?"

"No, sir. If I knew, I would not. And you will oblige me by considering this interview at an end; you do not retire. I will. And I will acquaint your father with the brutal insults you have heaped upon me. It is well for him that he has another son upon whom he can lavish his affection."

"Another son?" said Edgar, looking at her with wonder.

"Yes, sir, another son," said the lady. And rising, she rung a bell.

The same slouchy-looking girl appeared.

"Ellen," said Mrs Martin, "bring my baby here; this gentleman wants to see his little brother."

The girl disappeared; and Edgar Martin, uttering a most unequivocal and emphatic oath, turned and left the house without waiting to see his "little brother."

CHAPTER V.

MR GROSSBEAK was always in a better humour after dinner than before it. We said, when we first described him, that there was a thick strata of goodness beneath his rough exterior. He had just finished dinner one day, not very long after the advent of the twins, when John, his cockney servant, entered his room and said:

"There is a gentleman below, sir, that wishes to see you. He said I name was Martin.' Shall I show 'im hup, sir?

"Yes, John."

The servant bowed and disappeared.

"I wonder which Martin it is?" soliloquised the old gentleman.

His soliloquy was cut short by the entrance of a person too young and too good-looking to be "old Levi Martin."

This person bowed very politely, and took the seat to which Mr Grossbeak pointed.

"You do not seem to remember me, Mr Grossbeak," said Mr Martin.

"Your face seems to run in my mind," said Mr Grossbeak. "But I can't locate you."

"My name is Edgar Martin, sir. I used to see you when you did business in South-street."

"What, little Edgar—my young sailor-boy, whom I used to like because he had rather rough it on salt water than be a sneak in his father's counting-room."

"The same little Edgar, sir—only somewhat grown up," said the other, laughing. "I came in as master of the 'Heliotrope,' this time, sir."

"You look like one, my boy—you do, indeed. I'm glad to see you. And so you came in master this time," said Mr Grossbeak; and the old gentleman resumed his pipe, ready for a cozy chat, which he liked above all things.

"I came my last voyage as master," said Martin. "Our captain took the fever at Calcutta, and died; and I brought the ship home

without losing a spar, in twenty days' time less than the quickest passage before on record!"

"Well, I congratulate you, my boy. What does your father have to do to it?"

"I have had but very few words with him since my return, sir."

"Why? Is there anything in the wind between you and him? Have you been courting a poor girl, or committing any other such unpardonable sin?"

"No, sir; I have done no courting yet, although he has set the example; for he has married during my absence."

"Why, boy, your father must be mad. He is older than I am!"

"Yes, sir, several years, I should judge. And his new wife appears to be younger than I am. I had a very brief interview with her, and she wanted to show me a little brother. But I didn't wait to see him!"

"Well—well! Wonders will never cease. But he is your father, still. You have not cut adrift from him because of his folly?"

"No, sir. Not for that. But this Jezebel has driven my poor, gentle sister from his house, her rightful home, and now—God only knows where she is! I fear that in her despair she has thrown her life away."

And Edgar could hardly restrain his tears while he spoke.

"Poor boy—poor boy!" said Mr Gross-bell. "On my soul, I am sorry for you. If there is anything on earth I can do for you, I will do it cheerfully!"

"By the looks of this woman I should think,

sir, that she worked her cards to suit him. She is young, and can be saving now, leaving off extravagance until his death will give her a full sweep!"

"Ah! so much the worse. Just think if there is anything I can do for you. If your father turns the cold shoulder on you, I'll be a father to you myself! I'm getting to be quite a family man, at any rate."

Then Mr Grossbeak told him all about the basket and its contents, and what he had decided to do.

"It only proves the nobleness of your heart, sir!" said Edgar.

"Tush! It was only doing right—no more! But keep it to yourself, my boy—keep it to yourself! I don't care about the whole world knowing of my foibles!"

"I will not speak of it, sir. But I will now speak of my business here. I cannot and will not again sail in the employment of my father. You have a ship, the 'Prometheus,' lying idle!"

"Yes—I intended to sell her."

"I would like to put her in trade, and have the command of her, sir!"

"You shall have it, my boy, and funds to fit her out, and find her with, on the start."

"Thank you, sir—I will try and make her pay you."

"You have made me quite happy, my boy! I was afraid that I could do nothing for you in your great trouble! And let us hope that your dear sister will yet turn up safe and sound."

"Alas! sir, I fear not! She was a gentle, fragile creature, and ill fitted to stand the rough weather of the outside world!"

"Father; dear father!" cried Lizzie, bounding in—"I've heard such a beautiful piece of music to-day, that—"

She stopped suddenly, as she saw a strange gentleman conversing with her father.

"Excuse me, father, I thought you were alone!" she now said, and turned to retire.

"Hold on, my pet. This gentleman is an old friend of mine. It is Edgar Martin—little Edgar I used to call him. Edgar," he continued, as she returned, "this is my daughter Lizzie."

Edgar rose and bowed.

"Can't you play the piece of music?" asked the fond father.

"Yes; if you will go to the parlour."

"To be sure we will. Edgar, you'll spend the rest of the evening with us."

Edgar looked at Lizzie, and he did not wish to make any excuse.

CHAPTER VI.

EDGAR MARTIN had only just left the house of his father, when the mother of Mrs Martin made her appearance there.

"What is the matter, my dear?" she asked of Minna.

Minna, half sobbing in anger, told her of her visitor and his language. Also, what she said to him.

"He did not wait to see his little brother?" said the widow, with a sneer.

"No ; he went away, slamming the door behind him as if he would tear the house down, and swearing like a Turk."

"It is just as well. He must have better eye-sight than his father, and the less he sees of the brat the better for you and the chances. And if you tell the old man a big story, and wash it well into him with sobs and tears, you'll make him discard the fellow, and there'll be an end of his chances at the old man's fortune!"

"Never fear but I'll tell him a story big enough!" said the young wife. "And I'll get him to make his will just as soon as I can!"

"That's right, Minna. The sooner the better. I'd like to have him remember me in it. But I'm afraid he will not, because I can't pay him back the few thousands I have borrowed from him!"

"Never mind, mother. You shall never want while I have the purse-strings. Have you heard anything more about his girl?"

"Yes ; she has left the country—gone abroad as a travelling companion to an invalid lady."

"Good. I hope that she will never return!"

"Have you any spare cash, Minna? My board-bill is due to-day."

"There's a fifty-dollar bill, mother. I picked the old gent's pocket again last night. He had a pretty good walletful, and I hope he'll not miss it. Is it enough?"

"It will do," said Mrs Desha. "But why didn't you get the wallet and its contents away just as he was going out. Then he would have thought he'd lost it on the street."

"I did try, mother. But he is sharp where

money is concerned, and I was afraid of detection."

"So much the better for you, Minna. He will leave a large sum for his widow."

"Yes, if he dies. The old fool is shockingly healthy. I'll get grey-headed before he kicks the bucket, I'm afraid."

"Poh, child. You are not twenty yet. He can't last long. It's a great pity he doesn't drink!"

"He would if it didn't cost so much!" said the young wife, with a sneer.

"He never takes trips on railroads, or in steamboats, either. No chance of a lucky accident. But still he is old, and can't last long. But look, there he comes. I'll go to your room, and while you tell him your story in the little back parlour, I'll slip out and go to my boarding-house. It is best that he should not know I have been here."

And the wily serpent of a widow hastened away, while her daughter prepared to play her *role* of deception.

CHAPTER VII.

No sooner had Edgar Martin arranged with Mr Grossbeak to take command of the "Prometheus" than he called upon his father to settle his accounts in connection with the "Heliotrope."

The old man was in his counting-room.

He did not raise his eyes from the accounts until he heard the voice of his son.

"I have come, sir, to square up the accounts of the 'Heliotrope,'" said Edgar, abruptly.

The old gentleman raised his head with a quick, nervous motion, and his hand trembled as he took off his spectacles.

"You here?" he said, at last.

"Yes, sir, on business."

"What did you go to my house and insult my wife for?" inquired the old man.

"I went there, sir, to try and learn what it was that made my poor sister leave her home. It was I who received insult—not I who insulted. The brazen Jezebel who reigns there—"

"Stop, sir—stop, sir. You must not use harsh names when you speak of my wife."

"Very well, sir, I will not speak of her at all. Direct your clerks to attend to my accounts, and to pay me what is due me."

"If you will go and make a humble apology to my wife, I will forgive you," said the old man, not appearing so thick of business.

"I shall never ask your forgiveness for anything I have said to her," said Edgar.

"Leave my counting-room, sir!" thundered the old man, in a violent rage. "I disown and disinherit you, sir!"

"Will you settle my accounts, sir, in connection with the ship 'Heliotrope,' of which I came in master?" said Edgar, sternly.

"You are master of her no longer. You shall not sail in a ship of mine, sir."

"I do not wish to, sir! I already command another ship, sir!"

"Another ship? What ship, sir?"

"The 'Prometheus,' sir, which will sail soon."

"Who owns her? Who has been fool enough to trust you with a ship?"

"Mr Martin Grossbeak, sir, who is as well satisfied of my capability to command his ship, as the Board of Examiners were that I could bring the 'Heliotrope' home. Now, sir, having answered your questions, I will trouble you to settle the accounts of which I have spoken three or four times."

"You are a minor, sir. I'll settle no accounts with you!" cried the old man.

"Then, sir, I will take measures to have a friend, who is not a minor, libel your ship for the wages due me."

"What, sir! Do you dare to threaten to sue your own father?"

"By your actions, sir, I should judge that you had forfeited all claim to that title. Not having received any support from you since I was twelve years old, I think the law will free me from any control which you might assume, or attempt to assume, over me. Once more, and for the last time, shall my accounts be settled?"

"Yes!" said the old man, huskily.

His son had spoken the truth. He could not legally control him now. He bade his chief clerk "close up the 'Heliotrope's' account with her late master."

CHAPTER VIII.

FOR an hour or more, without moving, or even turning over a sheet of paper, the old merchant sat. His eyes were fixed vacantly upon the figures; but for once his mind seemed to have wandered away from them.

At last he aroused himself, and asked his chief clerk if he had settled with Edgar.

"Yes, sir; and he has gone," said the clerk.

"Gone? The boy is a fool. He might have yielded. But now, I will see him no more."

"Here is the morning's mail, sir," said the clerk, emptying a bag of letters on the table.

"Ah! I'll look it over."

And the merchant took up a letter, bearing a foreign post-mark—that of Paris.

The superscription was in a peculiar, angular, and very beautiful hand, evidently that of a female. He knew it; for he turned pale, and his hands trembled like an aspen-leaf. It was from his daughter. And it was directed—not to him, but to his son.

What devilish impulse guided him, we know not; but he hastily put that unopened letter in the grate, where a cheerful coal fire was burning. And he gazed at it, as if it was something to hate, until it was utterly consumed.

"So much for that!" he muttered, as the last vestige of it fluttered in cindery ash up the chimney. "I'll teach them obedience and respect, or they may starve."

He opened his business letters, and read them, with an unusual carelessness.

He arose, after filing away his letters, and walked down on the wharf, and looked at the ship which his son had just brought home to him, laden with a cargo which would add fifty thousand dollars to his coffers.

And, as if to taunt him, there lay the "Prometheus," in the same dock, and painters and riggers were busy in fitting her up for sea.

"Curse her!" he muttered, through his grinding teeth. "I wish that she'd sink on her first voyage with all on board. Old Grossbeak was always in my way. And now that he has just quit business, he can't keep out of it. The ship can't get a freight, if I can help it."

"How are you, this morning, Mr Martin?" said the principal agent of a first-class insurance company, who had just come down to the wharf with the examining-officers of the company.

"How do you do, Mr Callender!" said the merchant.

"Quite well, sir. Will you renew your insurance on the 'Heliotrope'—it ran out at the close of this voyage."

"Yes, when I send her to sea again. Have you come down to look at her?"

"No, sir. We are about to insure the 'Prometheus,' and are going to examine her."

"What, that rotten old tub? Grossbeak must have sold her—he has too much sense to send her to sea."

"Her register makes her just seven years old—one year younger than the 'Heliotrope,' and she bears the same rate on our books," said the agent, surprised at Mr Martin's remarks.

"Oh, I know she is older than that," said the merchant, testily. "I wouldn't trust freight in her at any rate. And I'd know who went as captain, too. They've got a queer way lately of putting boys where men ought to be!"

And the old man went buffly up the wharf.

"I'd like to know what is the matter with old Levi this morning," said the insurance agent to his friends. "His 'boy' brought the

'Heliotrope' home in better order, and in better time, than any other ship from the east this year. And he stands better recommended than most any captain on our list. The old man is in a huff about something. The 'Prometheus' must have got rotten uncommonly quick, if she isn't sound."

And he and his companions went on board of her to see how she looked.

CHAPTER IX.

"Howly Mother!—darlint Miss Lizzie, but isn't he a broth of a man? Just as nice a one as ivir wore a long-tailed coat, and said the sole of my fut to yez. 'Twas the bright gowlden agle he gave me, and said I must buy me a gown wid it on Christmas—long life to him, and may he never go dry!"

"Who are you talking about, Biddy?" asked Lizzie, looking up quietly from a book which she was reading.

"Who am I talking about?" cried the old nurse, in astonishment. "Who am I talking about? Well, well, is the darlint blind or stupid entirely? Who could I be talking about but the young captain? Isn't he a nice man? As straight as an ash, and six feet if he's an inch."

"Ah! you mean Mr Martin," said Lizzie.

"To be sure I do. With eyes as blue as the sea that he sails upon, and skin as brown wid health and life as a walnut, and hair that curls like sunlight on the ripplin' water. Och! if I was only a young, purty girl like you, darlint, wouldn't I set my cap for him."

Lizzie smiled, but made no reply.

But Biddy Megann was not to be smiled off the track.

"I think the ould gintleman, your father, is smitten wid him," she continued. "I never saw him talk or laugh so much wid any other man. He made more of him than he would if he had been the Prisidint—or even Daniel O'Connell, the great repaler. Well, I never knew the likes—the darlint is rading and never gives a thought to what I'm tellin' her about."

And Biddy took a huge pinch of snuff by way of consolation. And then she renewed the attack.

"After dinner, the master made me bring the blessed babies up into the library for him and the captain to look at. And the young man up and kissed 'em, just as if he'd been a father himself. He'll make some girl a nice husband, by the very sign o' that! 'Twas then he gave me the money. It's the purtiest gown there is in Beck's store, down Broadway, I'll buy in honour to him!"

Lizzie still kept her eyes upon her book: but a sly smile now and then told very well that she heard what Biddy was saying.

"I'll buy a green one. May his memory be green for ever wid them that love him," continued Biddy. "Did you mind his teeth when he laughed, Miss Lizzie—as white as the pearls you wear on your neck, sometimes!"

Lizzie yet made no answer, and Biddy, in desperation, took another pinch of snuff.

"Miss Lizzie—I say!" continued the old nurse, with a determination worthy the cause.

"D'ye know what love is?"

"Love—something good to eat, I suppose," said Lizzie, with provoking simplicity.

"Och, bother ! Just as if love was a per-tatie ! Something to ate ! You'll find that it's neither mate nor drink when it gets into your heart, darlint ! An' if that same Captain Martin does not tache you what it is, there's no truth in signs !"

Lizzie continued her reading ; and Biddy, fairly defeated in her attempt to draw her mistress into a conversation about young Martin, grew "huffy," and bustled out of the room.

When the sound of her footsteps died away, Lizzie laid down her book, and made the room ring with her merry laughter.

"The good old soul !" she cried. "The good old soul is dreadfully troubled for fear that I will not fall in love. And I—and I—"

Lizzie ended her remark with a sigh.

"Edgar Martin is indeed fine-looking, and seems noble-hearted !" said Lizzie, who, after his departure, had been told of his recent troubles by her father. "I am sorry for him, for he seems to love his sister very dearly. God grant she may not have committed suicide."

CHAPTER X.

It was only three o'clock in the day on which Mr Levi Martin visited a coffee-house for the first time in years, when his young wife, to her astonishment, saw him come home. His usual hour of return from business was six in the evening, in time for tea ; for he always dined at a cheap restaurant.

She did not notice his unsteady step and flushed face until he entered the parlour.

Then, when he crossed the carpet and, stumbling, fell full length on the floor, she saw—neither to her horror nor disgust, but rather to her amusement, that he had been drinking.

“Dear—dear husband, what is the matter?” she asked, as she picked up his wig and placed it again on his head, from which it had pitched as he sprawled out.

“I had—had a q—quarrel with that d—d fool b—boy of mine!” he continued. “He would—wouldn’t come here on his knee—knees to ask forgive—forgiveness; and I told him to go—go to the devil. And—and I guess he went, for—for he hasn’t been b—back to me since!”

“Oh! I am so sorry if you have quarrelled with him on my account!” said the hypocritical woman. “He is young and foolish!”

“Old—old enough to do better!—to do better!” stammered the old man. “Come here, Min—Minna, and kiss me. You don’t know how—how I love you.”

With apparent affection the young woman drew a chair up beside him, and fondled and toyed with him as if he was indeed the object of her affections.

“You’re a nice—nice girl, Minna. I’d do almost any—anything for you,” continued the old man. “Have you been to din—dinner?”

“No, husband. We will dine together. I will be back as soon as I have told Bridget to get dinner ready!”

“Yes, be soon, dear—soon,” said Mr Mar-

tin, as his head drooped upon the back of the high easy-chair.

His wife was gone about a half hour. He was asleep and snoring loudly when she came back.

She approached him gently, and touched him on the arm. He did not move, or cease snoring. She put her hand upon the pocket-flap of his coat, where he usually carried his money—the inside breast-pocket—and pressed it gently. She felt the pocket-book, and still he slept the sound, stupid sleep which dulls the senses of the inebriate.

“I'll risk it!” she murmured; and with the dexterity of an old hand at the business, she removed the pocket-book, and in an instant concealed it in her own bosom.

Then she sat down, for she trembled with nervous excitement. But the work was done—and she thought well done.

As if anything criminal could be done well.

For nearly an hour Mr Martin slept soundly, and then the servant-girl came to tell Mrs Martin that dinner was ready.

Then Minna went and filled a wash-bowl with ice-water, and brought a bottle of cologne from her own dressing-table.

With a great deal of difficulty, she woke Mr Martin up; and when he was awake he was more sober, but had a dreadful headache. How she knew it, we cannot tell, but her preparations proved that she knew it would be so.

And she bathed his head, feverish hot, with the ice-water, and then with fragrant cologne, until he felt much better, and very grateful for

her tenderness—and ashamed, too ; for he knew that he had come home drunk, to speak plainly. But she, dear soul, didn't seem to know it, but spoke about his being overwearyed with the cares of business.

He trembled with nervousness, when he rose to go to the dining-room, but she steadied his steps, and said that she was so sorry he felt sick. He must not overwork himself ; for her sake, he must take better care of his health.

“You are a great comfort to me, my dear,” said he, to his wife. “If it was not for you, I should feel the disobedience of my boy very much. But you make everything smooth for me—look out so much for my comfort, that I know not how to thank you.”

“I only do my duty ; but that duty is my greatest pleasure,” said the “devoted” wife.

“I will try and spend more time with you, and not so much at the store,” continued the old man. “By the way,” he added, “you may need some more dresses. I can as well spare a fifty-dollar bill to-day as not.”

And he felt for his pocket-book.

His face turned ghastly white in spite of the wine he had been drinking. It was not in his pocket. He felt in all his other pockets—felt of course, in vain.

“Gone—gone !” he gasped.

“What is gone, husband ?” asked the wife, innocently.

“My pocket-book, with over a thousand dollars in it !” he muttered, hoarsely. “Maybe I dropped it in the parlour.”

And he left the table and hurried into the parlour to look for it.

Minna followed, and seemed as anxious in the search as he.

"You must have dropped it before you came in," she said. "Or, some one may have picked your pocket."

Mr Martin groaned. He felt too bad to talk, and felt again and again in his pocket, as if he could not realize his loss.

Although it was now dark, and candles had been lighted, he took his hat and started to go out.

"Where are you going, my dear?" asked his anxious wife.

"To look for my pocket-book," he replied, hoarsely. "A thousand dollars and over are in it!"

"But it is dark; if you have dropped it, some one has picked it up long before this."

Mr Martin groaned, and sat down again.

"Minna!" said he, after several minutes of silence, "Was I very drunk when I came home?"

"Why no, husband—not drunk, but so tired."

"I drank some brandy down town, and I am not used to it; it flew to my head," he continued. "I felt it, and came home. Some one must have got my pocket-book away on the street. A thousand dollars and over—it is enough to ruin me!"

And Mr Martin groaned again.

"Had you not better advertise your loss in the papers?" suggested Mrs Martin.

"What! and let the world know what a devilish careless old fool I've been? No—not that. It's lost, and there's the end of it," he groaned. "And it is all Edgar's fault. I'll make a will, and leave him a shilling, to buy a rope to hang himself with."

"I would make a will, but I would not disinherit him," said the wily woman. "What would the world say?"

"D—n the world! I don't owe it anything," continued the old man. "I *will* make a will, and I will disinherit him. You women are so cursed fond of forgiving; a man may spit in your face, and you'll wipe it with your handkerchief, and say you forgive him."

"But, husband, he is your son."

"So much the worse. He should have respected me enough not to insult me. But he shall be sorry for it—sorry for it. I'll make him beg your pardon yet, on his bended knees. The 'Prometheus' shan't have a pound of freight, if it costs me a thousand dollars more to keep it out of her."

And the old man seemed almost to forget his loss in his anger against his son.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME days elapsed after Mr Grossbeak had turned the "Prometheus" over to Edgar Martin—or Captain Martin, as we should properly call him—before the last-named individual called upon him, though Mr Grossbeak had told him, figuratively, to make his "house his home" during his stay in port.

To be sure, he was supposed to be very busy in superintending the refitting of his vessel, and securing a freight for her. But then his nights were not likely to be engaged.

So thought Lizzie Grossbeak, who had heard her father extend his warm invitation to young Martin, and who wondered why he did not accept it. Had she known the real noble nature of Edgar, she would have admired him for the resolution which kept him away.

When Edgar Martin did visit Mr Grossbeak, it was with a cloud upon his brow.

He came, unwillingly, to tell Mr Grossbeak how his father, having tried in vain, by his calumnies, to prevent him from getting the "Prometheus" insured, had used his influence—and he believed he had even used money—to prevent her getting a freight.

"I must read your father a lesson, and a severe one, my boy," said Mr Grossbeak, after Edgar had told his tale. "It is to spite you that he does this, and he is probably put up to it by that witch of Endor, whom he has married. The law fortunately protects my property, and he must be made to suffer in the only way he will feel it—through his pocket—for the injury he has done both of us. I do not wish to make money out of him—for I have enough, the Lord knows—but I shall enter suit against him, at once, for ten thousand dollars damage, for slander. My witnesses will be the insurance agents and the parties whom he has kept from freighting with you; and I know enough of law to feel confident of getting every dollar I ask for, and costs besides."

"It will serve him no more than right. But how shall I get a freight?" asked Edgar.

Mr Grossbeak thought a few moments, and then taking off his spectacles, he said, quietly:

"Buy one. Cotton is down to a very low figure, while freights are high, and a good chance is open to either the English or French market."

"Buy one, sir?" said Edgar in astonishment. "My savings in bank will not go over a couple of thousand dollars, and I have no credit. If I tried to get it, he would thwart me."

Mr Grossbeak smiled, and taking his check-book from a desk near his hand, signed a blank check on the Leather Manufacturers' Bank. Handing this to Edgar, he said:

"Let him thwart that, if he can! Go into the market and buy up a cargo of cotton. You will get it at a lower figure than I could, for you are not known as a dealer, and they will name a low price to you, thinking you not able to buy. But clinch them to the bargain the moment a bargain is made, and fill out that check to the amount of the bill."

"Mr Grossbeak, how can I ever thank you?—how ever repay you for this great kindness?" exclaimed the young captain.

"By telling nobody about it, my boy. Go and buy your cotton, and get to sea as soon as you can. I'll attend to your father's case while you are gone."

Edgar said no more. He knew that deeds were worth more than words to Mr Grossbeak.

CHAPTER XII.

"THE 'Prometheus' has got a freight at last, sir," said Mr Levi Martin's chief clerk to him, as the first-named gentleman, in no very good humour, entered his counting-room a day or two later than the dates in our last chapter.

"I don't believe it!" said Mr Martin, huffily.

"Perhaps you can believe your eyes, sir," said the old clerk, rather mortified by such a reply in the presence of the other clerks. "The cotton is going into her as fast as night and day gangs of stevedores can put it in."

"Who told you so?" asked Mr Martin.

"The firm who sold the cotton; and then I went to see for myself, and to know who shipped it," said the clerk, quietly.

"What fool shipped it?" asked Mr Martin.

"Your son, Edgar Martin, bought it at a cent a pound, under the lowest market price, and paid cash for it. It is shipped in his own name," said the clerk, with a smile of triumph.

"It is an infernal lie!" shouted Mr Martin, turning purple with rage.

"Very well, sir, you can see for yourself," said the clerk, quietly.

"I will see, by thunder! I will see!"

And Mr Martin jammed his hat ferociously upon his head, and went out of the counting-room as if he was after a runaway debton.

In half an hour, he came back, pale, nervous, as angry as before, but more quiet.

"Well, sir, did I lie?" asked the clerk.

"No!" said Mr Martin, gruffly. "Old

Grossbeak is at the bottom of it, and I'll be revenged on him if it costs me half that I'm worth! I'll show him what it is to interfere with me!"

"I believe that I address Levi Martin," said a portly, red-faced looking gentleman, who had come into the counting-room while the merchant was making the last remark, and who smiled as he heard it.

"Well, what do you want?" said Mr Martin, a little more excited.

"I am deputy-sheriff, sir," continued the stranger, in a business-like way.

"What the devil is that to me?"

"Considerable, just now. I have a notice and a writ to serve on you."

"A writ for me?" gasped Mr Martin.

"Yes, sir. The notice, which I here serve on you, by direction of Mr David Graham, attorney and solicitor, is of a suit commenced against you by Martin Grossbeak, Esq. (whom I heard you threatening when I came in), for ten thousand dollars damages for malicious slander. The writ is to arrest you, at once, on a criminal charge for the same offence, which I now do, in the name of the Commonwealth of the State of New York!"

Mr Martin was completely silenced with surprise. He saw that it was no use to attempt to avoid those papers.

Turning to his chief clerk, he said, in quite a humble tone:

"Keep this arrest still, if you can, Mr Brown. I'll get bail and be back soon."

"Certainly, sir," said the clerk. But his

eye was bright with malicious joy, as he saw the master who had so often insulted him walked off by the officer; that master whom he could not reply to when he had a large family dependent upon his salary.

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER hunting about some time, and learning a new lesson—that a man in trouble sees difficulty in finding friends—Mr Levi Martin succeeded in getting satisfactory bail, and having entered it, was set free by Mr Orser, whom he would have gladly choked, if he dared; for that gentleman had pertinaciously stuck by him until the bail was found, in spite of Mr Martin's offer to find the bail and call around at his office.

The deputy-sheriff would have acted differently had Mr Martin treated him at all decently at the start. But he was human; and having a chance to annoy the old merchant in return for his treatment, he did so most effectually, by making him feel that he was a prisoner while he had him in charge. As Mr Martin could not find a friend to go bail for him before dinner-time, and Mr Orser said that he always dined at home in Eldridge-street, the merchant was obliged to accompany him to that celebrated lock-up, where he was introduced to three or four slavers, a dozen or less bankrupts, a forger or two, and several other less distinguished gentlemen, by his full name.

He was too mortified to eat much dinner, though pressed to do so by the officer, who told

him there would be no charge for board without he became a regular inmate of the establishment.

Observing by the manner of the officer that he had no particular liking for his new guest, the prisoners, whose means enabled them to dine at the Sheriff's table, got off innumerable "guys" upon the old gentleman.

At last, much to the relief of Mr Martin, dinner was over, and the prisoners went back to their quarters.

CHAPTER XIV.

As soon as Mr Levi Martin was free from the officer, by reason of his bail, he hurried toward his store, stopping at the coffee-house again to take some brandy, for he felt that he needed stimulus, even to meet the inquiring looks of his clerks.

Thus reinforced, he entered his counting-room and proceeded to look over his letters which had been brought in during his absence. When this was done, he tried to enter into an ordinary conversation with Brown about business, but he found it tough work; the words came up chokingly; even the brandy failed in its effect.

"I don't feel very well—I think I'll go home!" he said.

"I reckon the old man does feel sick—sick of having run the 'Prometheus' down so, and keeping freight out of her," said Brown to the other clerks. "It will go hard with him if we are called for witnesses. He'll lose his ten

thousand dollars, and a heap more in expenses, besides going to jail, as like as not. He had better have let Master Edgar alone. The young fellow has more heart in his body than the old man would have if his body was all heart, instead of dust and bones !”

Mr Martin again stopped at the coffee-house on his way home, and imbibed a stiff horn. But it seemed to be as useless as so much water.

His observant wife noticed his looks, as well as the early hour of his return, and, with great seeming anxiety, asked what was the matter.

“I’m sick—sick at heart, and all out o’ sorts !” said Mr Martin, dejectedly.

“Poor, dear man, you are killing yourself with business !” said she, in a tone full of sympathy. “Let me mix you something to revive you.”

“It is no use, Minna—no use,” he said. “Twice, this afternoon, I’ve drank brandy. It did me no good.”

“I will mix you some that will,” she said.

And she went to his seldom-visited sideboard, and taking out some old brandy and some choice Jamaica, she mixed the two and sweetened them so much that they did not appear strong. Having more than half-filled an old-fashioned goblet with this, she added some lemon syrup, and made of it a very good tasting punch.

At least, Mr Martin thought and said so, as he drank it off.

“I have at least one consolation in you, my

love," said he ; " my enemies may do their worst, but they cannot take you from me."

" No, nor our darling child," said the artful woman. " You have had some new trouble to-day, husband. Tell your Minna what it is, and let her sympathise with you."

The punch began to work. Mr Martin returned the caressing kiss of his young wife, and then told her of his arrest.

" What a brute that old Grossbeak is ! " said the indignant wife. " I wish my mother had him to deal with ! She is smart, and can tease a man to death if she wants to ! "

" I wish she'd tease him to death," said Mr Martin, with a sigh. " I must get even with him some way ! How this slander suit will turn out is more than I can tell. I'm afraid that it will cost me a great deal of money, for I've been mad and careless, and said many things which I can't prove."

" I wish you'd advise with mother about it," said Minna. " She is a smart woman where law is concerned, and then she is on very friendly terms with the great Irish lawyer, Mr Patrick Hourly, who is so eloquent before juries."

" I must have a lawyer, though they do charge awfully, and I suppose that he is one of the best. They have got Graham against me, and he is the star of the New York bar. I wish that your mother was here."

" I'll send Bridget around to her boarding-house at once," said Minna ; and she started to do so.

" Minna ! " said the old man.

"Well, dear?"

"You may write a note to your mother, and tell her to bring her baggage with her. We have plenty of room, and you'll not be so lonesome if she is here."

"Oh, dear husband, you are too good to me."

And twenty or thirty rapid kisses paid the old gentleman for his kind thought.

Minna came back in a few moments, for she hurried off her note, fearing that such a thing as change of mind might come over her newly-indulgent spouse.

When she returned, he had begun to feel much better. Her punch had worked wonders.

"Let us have a nice supper after your mother comes," said he. "Some oysters, and a little old wine."

CHAPTER XV.

MR MARTIN was in a splendid humour, notwithstanding his troubles, when Mrs Desha arrived at his house, an hour or so later, in a hackney-coach, with an unaccountably small amount of baggage for a lady of her pretensions.

He gallantly met her at the gate, and insisted on paying her hackman himself, after escorting her to the door.

Minna soon after announced that supper was on the table, and the trio sat down to what was a "lordly banquet" compared to the usual suppers in that house.

And over his oysters, and salad, and wine, Mr Martin told Mrs Desha all about his troubles with Mr Grossbeak, and she, good woman,

sympathized with him heartily, and promised to aid him to the uttermost in circumventing and punishing his foe.

"I'll find out all about him, just as soon as I can!" she said. "I'll guarantee there is some weak point about him. There never was a man without them. And when I find an opening, if I don't widen it, I'm not a woman!"

"Only help me to beat him, and I'll never say anything about the cash I've let you have."

"You'll need a lawyer," continued Mrs Desha, not seeming to hear his last remark. "And I can get Mr Hourly to act for you at half price—stealings in," she added, *sotto voce*.

"Oh dear, that will be a favour. For lawyers do charge dreadfully. Them and the doctors are enough to ruin the world."

"Yet both must be had sometimes," said Mrs Desha, with a smile.

"To be sure, and that is the reason they charge so. If people could do without them, they'd work for almost anything, and be as humble as other people about it. I hate to hire anybody who don't thank me when I pay him, and feel as if I had done him a favour by employing him. I don't like to see high-headed people, myself."

"They're apt to stumble, I know," said Mrs Desha, hardly suppressing a laugh.

"Did Minna tell you of my loss, the other day?" asked Mr Martin.

"No," said Minna, herself. "I knew that you hated to have it known abroad, so I did not even let the servant know it."

"Well, your mother is different. She will not blab it around like some folks."

"Of course not! What did you lose?" asked the widow.

"A pocket-book, with over a thousand dollars in it—an awful sum for these hard times," said the merchant, with a sigh.

"Dear me! How did you lose it?" exclaimed the widow.

"The Lord only knows. I had it when I left the counting-room, I am sure. Soon after I came home I wanted to give Minna some money, and then I missed it. I must have dropped it in the street, or else some one picked my pocket."

"Well, it was a great loss, but Minna must be all the more economical," said the widow. "It is fortunate for you, Mr Martin, that she has been brought up to be saving. Most young wives are very dressy, and spend a deal of money in shopping."

"Minna is a good girl—a good girl," said Mr Martin.

"Shall I call on Mr Hourly, and arrange for him to attend to your suit?" asked the widow.

"Yes, if you please. And get him just as low as you can—and get his terms in writing, so that there will be no back-out from it. If he beats old Grossbeak, you can tell him I'll make him a present of a hundred or two over and above his charges."

CHAPTER XVI.

THOSE were not railway days in Europe. The cumbrous diligence or the lighter but more expensive post-chaise were the usual travelling conveniences in most parts of Europe.

And in one of the latter, a company, consisting of three persons, was moving slowly over a rough road in a mountainous pass in Italy, not far over the French border, at a time not far from that when Mr Martin found himself in trouble for telling falsehoods about Mr Grossbeak.

The three persons inside the carriage were all females. One, an elderly lady, was very evidently an invalid—for she was pale, her features worn and wasted, and she was supported in an easy position on the back seat by pillows. Her dress was rich, and the few ornaments which she wore were of the most costly kind.

In front of her, plainly but neatly-dressed, in a garb of mourning hue, sat a young person, who needed no ornament to enhance her beauty. She seemed slender, yet very finely formed—her complexion was as delicate as the inner leaves of the moss-rose, yet had the colour of healthy life. Her eyes were very large, and blue—her hair, almost black—her eye-brows and long silken eye-lashes, quite so. Her features were faultless, and of that Grecian mould which would have ravished the heart of the gifted Palmer, whose studies ran so much that way.

A look of quiet melancholy added a deep and tender expression to that sweet face, which description could do no justice to.

The only ornament which she wore was a plain gold ring upon the “wedding-finger,” and a small bosom-pin, which was connected with a miniature in ivory of a fine-looking man in the dress of a seaman.

By her superior looks, yet gentle air of deference, one would judge her to be the companion rather than the servant of the lady who occupied the back seat in the carriage.

The other person, who sat beside her, was a stout, broad-shouldered, large-handed, healthy-looking girl, who might be eighteen, or might be thirty. The auburn hair, coarse as sail-twine—the rosy face well freckled; the wide mouth, and the rollicking carelessness and joviality of her face, told her to be an “exile of Erin.”

There was no male person with the carriage except the driver. But in the rear of it came one of the huge carts of the country, drawn by two stout Flemish horses. This cart contained the baggage of the party; and beside the driver sat a man whose looks, arms, dress, everything told his nationality as plainly as the looks of Kathleen in the carriage did hers.

He wore a bell-crowned shot, which once had been beaver. Now it was napless. It had probably descended in his family several generations, judging from its fashion. He wore a butternut-coloured, home-made cloth coat, with very large horn buttons on it. The tails, which were broad at the hips, narrowed down to points when they reached nearly to the calf of his leg, making it truly a “swallow-tail.” His vest was of the same material, but rather scanty, for it did not quite reach the waist band of his trousers—must have been made before he had grown so much. His trousers, too, were at least six inches too short, but they were a bright blue, and were strapped down to his cow-hide

boots with stout leathern straps, evidently to keep him from jumping out of them. His starched cotton shirt collar stood up under his ears with alarming stiffness, keeping his head sufficiently erect to suit the strictest martinet in the army.

From the huge pocket of this individual's trousers protruded the brass butts of two enormous horse-pistols. By his side stood a huge musket. By the care he took of the baggage, and his watchful looks ahead and all around, he was evidently the male servant and protector of the lady in the carriage.

The carriage had arrived at the foot of a rugged, tree-covered mountain, and the driver had halted to water his horses.

And the aforesaid person in the baggage-cart had gathered up his long, gaunt, but yet muscular form, and descended to the ground, musket and all; and he now advanced to the carriage, and, looking in, with his sharp features and keen gray eyes, said, addressing the elderly lady:

"How d'ye feel now, Miss Peters?"

"I am weary, Eliphalet," she said. "But it is only ten miles to the next stopping place, the driver says."

Then, turning to the younger lady, he asked:

"How do you stand it, Mrs Armstrong? It e'en a'most jerks the life out of you—don't it?"

"Oh, no! I ride very comfortably, thank you," said the lady, with a smile.

"Why don't you ask me how I like the bit of a ride, Misther 'Liphalet?" asked the Irish girl, her eyes full of fun, and her mouth widening for a laugh.

"Because you're made o' tough stuff, and can stand it, *Catherine!*" said he.

"Och, bother wid your *Catherine!*" said she, with a laugh. "Why don't you call me Kate, like a dacent man?"

"Because *Catherine* is the properest," said he, laying an emphasis on the italicized syllable. "I had a cousin, once, that was called *Catherine* by her folks, and she went by that till she grew up and got proud, and then she wanted to be called Kate."

"We've got a tough hill ahead," said Eliphalet, looking up the mountain. "And it looks pokerish up there, too. If any of them brigands they were talkin' about at the last village, mean to do anythin' in the stealin' line, that's jist sich a spot as they'd ought to pick; for we can't whip up and get along when we're goin' up hill. But if they know when they're well off, they'll keep shy of this party. I've got all my weepens loaded with buckshot, and it scatters awful to tell."

"I don't think there will be any danger," said the lady.

"May be not," said Eliphalet; "but as it is up hill, and hard on the horses, I'll walk on a leetle ways ahead, and keep a peepin' about. It won't do no hurt, if it doesn't do any good!"

And Eliphalet stalked on ahead as the carriage moved slowly up the steep ascent before them.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE carriage and cart toiled up the steep and rough mountain road, which seemed to grow more rough and difficult the further they ad-

vanced. A dense forest, with thick undergrowth, bordered both sides of the way, where huge precipices did not present steep sides on either hand, as they did frequently. The road seemed to have been made in an old water-way worn by a mountain torrent, if it ever had been made at all. The drivers were frequently obliged to stop to rest their panting beasts, and the progress was very slow.

Eliphalet, now striding on ahead, and then sitting down on some huge boulder, took matters very easy, though he kept a bright look out ahead.

The driver, in answer to a question from the invalid, had just informed her that it was only a mile more to the mountain top, when the voice of Eliphalet was heard a few yards in advance.

"Hallo, you ! What do you want, you god-darned big-whiskered babboon ?"

Eliphalet had already brought his old musket to a level, and now he cried :

"If you don't take your darned ugly carcass out of the way, you black-muzzled ape, I'll bang away, and you'll go to kingdom come afore you can say salvation !"

But the brave fellow did not know that he had enemies in the rear, for while he was taking a deliberate aim at the leader of the band in front, two men sprung from their concealment in the bushes on either side, and just behind him ; and, quicker than thought, he found himself on the flat of his back, and, in spite of his struggles, held firmly down, while one of his captors held a glittering knife in very close proximity to his throat.

"Kill me, darn ye, if ye like!" shouted the brave fellow. "But don't tech to hurt the wimmen! If you do, there'll be war 'twixt your country and the United States of North America, as sure as shootin'!"

The leader uttered a command in Italian, and in a moment Eliphalet was bound hand and foot.

The carriage-driver and the cartman had fled down the hill, leaving their horses, as well as the helpless females, at the first sight of the brigands.

The leader of the party, or he who seemed to be such, by his appearance and actions, now came to the side of the carriage, and speaking in very good English, said:

"You need not fear me, ladies. Your lives are safe. But my necessities are such that I cannot say so much for your property."

"I have but little money with me, but what I have you can take. I would only hope that you would spare me enough to take me to the next town, where I can send for more!" said the eldest lady.

And she handed him a well-filled purse.

"You wear diamonds?" said the brigand
"My men would be rude if they saw them."

The lady knew that it would be useless to remonstrate, and she took the diamond pendants from her ears, a couple of magnificent rings from her fingers, and a pin from her bosom.

The bandit bowed gracefully as he received them, and put them in his pocket, and then asked, very politely, the time of day.

"Look for yourself, sir."

And the lady handed him her gold watch.

The brigand now looked at the other lady.

"I have no valuables, sir," said she.

"Mrs Armstrong is too valuable herself, to require valuables!" said the brigand, bowing more like an accomplished cavalier than a robber.

"You know my name, sir? Who are you? Perhaps this is but a masquerade?"

"A very serious one, fair lady. In Paris, a few weeks ago, you rather scornfully rejected a suitor, who, maddened by your beauty, knelt at your feet! He told you then, that you would see him again, when, perchance, you would be the suitor, instead of him."

"Good heavens—the Count Ferrero!" cried the lady, turning deathly pale.

"In Paris, the Count Ferrero!" said the brigand, tearing off his false whiskers. "But here, in my native mountains, the brigand chief, Ghibetti, the leader of the mountain bands of Italy!"

"Well, sir, since you have taken from Mrs Peters all that she has with her, I hope that you will untie the only servant we have left, and let us proceed!" said Mrs Armstrong, with dignified hauteur.

"After Mrs Peters has given me a draft for a thousand golden Napoleons on her Parisian banker, I shall permit her to proceed," said Ghibetti, coolly. "I require it as her ransom."

"Give me my writing-case from under the seat, Kate," said the lady.

The Irish girl, who had done nothing but

cross herself, and mutter prayers, so far, found the box and handed it to her mistress.

"To whose name shall I make the draft payable?" asked the lady.

"To the bearer!" said the chief, quietly. "Names are inconvenient at times, as they are convenient at others."

The lady wrote out the draft. The brigand looked at it carefully, folded it, and placed it in the purse which he had just taken from her.

"Allow me the use of your desk a moment," said he.

And taking a piece of paper, he rapidly traced a few lines upon it, and made a mark resembling a knight templar's cross.

"Keep that by you!" he said. "If you are again interrupted on the road, that will at once pass you. I will have one of my men drive your carriage up to the next post-house. Your own man can follow with your baggage, which contains nothing that I stand in need of. The two trunks only, which belong to Mrs Armstrong, will be taken off."

"Why do you deprive me of my baggage, sir?" said the lady, sternly.

"I only retain it for your use, fair lady!" said he. "You surely would not like to visit my mountain home without a change of garments."

"Visit your home, sir? You are not mad enough to think that with life I will go there?"

"I am not so utterly mad now, as when I knelt at your feet in Paris, fair lady; but you are going to my mountain home—quietly if you will, forcibly if you compel the use of force!"

"Name her ransom and I will pay it!" said Mrs Peters, seeing that the daring chief was indeed in earnest.

He laughed mockingly.

"You are wealthy, lady!" said he; "but all your wealth ten times told over, would not suffice for her ransom! That lady shall be my wife—or—or! I will not threaten now, but execute. Come, Mrs Armstrong, I am waiting for you. Do not oblige me to use force. If you go peaceably, go with those maidens, and I will not trouble you until I see you in my mountain home. If not, the litter is ready, and so are my men.

Whether a hope of escape from the maidens filled her breast, or a dread of the rudeness of the men, we know not. But Mrs Armstrong descended from the carriage calmly, and with a pale face, but a firm step, joined the two maidens. At a wave from his hand they turned and led the way into the wood, followed by the unhappy lady.

"Och, hone, she is gone from us for ever!" sobbed poor Kate, unable to keep in her tears.

Poor Mrs Peters had fainted from excess of emotion, and saw no more.

The brigand chief now made a couple of his men take the baggage which he pointed out from the cart, and then approaching Eliphalet, he very coolly picked up the old musket which the Yankee had dropped when he was seized, and handed it to one of his men. Then taking the brass-mounted pistols from the poor fellow's pockets, he handed them to another of his followers.

“Darn ye, don’t take them are weepsons !” cried Eliphalet. “They belonged to my great-grandfather, when he fought the Britishers in seventeen seventy-six.”

“I will take care of them till you happen my way again,” said the chief, with a smile. “I honour your courage, my man, and shall now release you so that you can take your lady on her journey. One of my men will help you until you get to the next post. And you may as well be quiet when you are untied, for I’d hate to hurt you.”

“I aint afeard of you or any other man that would rob a woman,” said Eliphalet, scornfully.

The chief said nothing, but at a sign one of his men unbound Eliphalet.

“Darn ye,” cried the Yankee, as he rose and shook himself. “Come one at a time, and I’ll lick the whole batch of you.”

And he fairly wept with rage.

“Misther ‘Liphalet, do be afther comin’ here. I belave the missis is dead !” cried Kate, now able to speak out since the objects of her dumb terror were gone.

“She’s only swooned away ; where’s your camfire ?” said the man, looking at her closely.

In a little while, aided by Kate and the honest Yankee, Mrs Peters had recovered her consciousness.

And now in tears, she asked Eliphalet what had best be done.

“The best we can do, so far as I can see, is to drive on to where we can find Christians, if there is sich a thing in the country,” said Eliphalet. “We can’t do no good a-staying here,

that's sartin and sure. The mean cusses have got my weepsons, but I'll have 'em back; see if I don't. If they hadn't taken me onawares, I'd made some of 'em squat! I was just a-goin' to shoot, when they downed me."

"Poor Mrs Armstrong—they will kill her!" sobbed the lady.

"I don't believe they will. She is so good that the Lord will help her out of their clutches some way. But I'll git on the box and drive on. You velveteen-coloured thief, drive the cart there, as your master told you to."

And Eliphalet pointed the sole remaining brigand to the cart, while he drove the carriage up the hill.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALMOST as soon as Mrs Armstrong entered the forest, she found herself in a narrow footpath, and one of the girls having preceded her, the other followed, and they went along the mountain-side for some time in silence. After walking some distance they came to a clear and rippling spring, by the side of which hung a horn cup.

The girl who was in advance stopped, and taking the cup, filled it with the cold, crystal water, and gracefully offered it to the lady.

Mrs Armstrong was touched with the little act of kindness and drank some of the refreshing liquid. Thanking her in English, she asked how far she had to go.

The girl said something in Italian, which Mrs Armstrong did not understand. But she now addressed her in French, asking the same

question. The girl still replied in Italian—apparently the only language which she spoke.

“The bandit has given me safe companions,” she said, bitterly. “I can neither plead with them to plot for my escape, or deceive them by any conversation; but perhaps it is best. They would not be apt to favour my escape, though escape I will! and heaven help me!”

For over an hour she followed the girl who preceded her, in silence, after her failure to open a conversation, when they suddenly emerged from the forest upon an open plateau, surrounded by even loftier trees than those she had seen further back. And here a scene met her eye which brought forth an exclamation of surprise from her lips.

A village of snowy tents, arranged on regular lines, occupied a large portion of this plateau. Small camp-fires burned here and there, and about these were women engaged in cooking, or other domestic work.

In front of many of the tents were tables, at which were seated brigands in their picturesque costume—some drinking wine, others smoking, still others playing cards and dominoes.

The girl who led the way passed straight on through this encampment, and entered the forest beyond. There, within easy call of the tents, were to be seen three or four pavilions, much larger than tents—both lofty and roomy. Into one of these the captive lady was conducted, and she was astonished to see how magnificently it was furnished. It was curtained and canopied with velvet, embroidered

with gold. It was carpeted with the softest work of the famed Brussels looms. Its furniture—consisting of chairs, tables, lounges, sofas, &c.—was equally rich and elegant.

One of the maidens hastened to produce, upon a silver salver, wine, cake, and fruit, for the lady, but she refused them. The other then, by signs, invited her to enter an inner apartment, heavily curtained off from the main room; and here she saw a most elegant couch, a library of books, a harp, and a guitar, and a dressing-table with everything convenient and necessary for the toilette. Curtained off on one side was a bath-room, through which, in an open wooden viaduct, ran a stream of clear and sparkling water.

But what astonished the lady most was, that her trunks stood in the bed-chamber, though she had not seen anything of Ghibetti since she left him on the main road, nor had any one passed them by the route they had come.

It almost seemed as if magic had something to do with the matter.

Upon going into the outer apartment again, she saw an open note on the centre-table, which was graced with vases of beautiful and fragrant flowers. The note was headed with her name, and she read it. So will we:

“MRS ARMSTRONG,—I will not be brutal or ungenerous, now that you are in my power. I will try by kindness yet to win the love which I crave. The apartments you have been conducted to are sacredly yours. No man’s foot-step—not even mine—shall cross its threshold without your permission. The maidens who

led you here are my own sisters; they will be your attendants and companions; they both speak French, although I forbade their answering any questions of yours in that language until you had arrived here. and they had been so directed by me. You will have everything you wish for, except liberty. That will only be yours when I am. With hope for my only consolation, love my only excuse, I am your adorer,

GHIBETTI."

"P. S.—You must not attempt to escape. My sentinels are posted at every avenue; one step outside of your pavilion, and you will meet with interruption."

"Tyrannically kind," she murmured, as she read the note. "At least I can avoid his presence, if he keeps his promise."

And now she looked with a little more attention at the two Italian girls, since he had said they were his sisters.

By their great resemblance to the chief, she did not doubt that he had stated the truth. The eldest did not appear to be over eighteen; the youngest, a couple of years less. They were almost too robust to be pretty, yet there was beauty in their large, flashing black eyes, their Grecian features, their erect and well-developed figures.

"What is your name?" she asked of the eldest, who had taken a seat near her, and was engaged in arranging a bouquet from an apron full of flowers in her lap.

"Guilia," replied the girl, quietly, in French.

"And the name of your sister?"

"Lucia," was the low-toned reply.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON the evening after Mrs Desha became a regularly installed inmate of the house of Mr Levi Martin, the last-named gentleman received a visit from the distinguished attorney and counsellor, Mr Patrick Hourly. And a bland, smooth-spoken, ferret-eyed gentleman he was. What he didn't know about law was neither in the books, nor known of in tradition—so, at least, he seemed to think.

At the suggestion of Mrs Desha that a little wine would warm the heart of the lawyer and make him liberal-minded, Mr Martin had, with a sigh, ordered a bottle up, and now sipped it in company with the counsellor.

“Can you remember all the witnesses that you ever spoke before when you were running down the ‘Prometheus?’” asked Mr Hourly, with a very slight tinge of the brogue on his tongue.

“Not all, perhaps—but nearly all” replied Mr Martin. “There were the insurance men, and some half-dozen shippers, besides my own clerks.”

“The clerks wouldn't be apt to testify against you for fear of losing their situations,” said Mr Hourly. “But the other men would be different. I expect we'll have to pack the jury.”

“Pack the jury?” repeated Mr Martin, inquiringly.

“Yes! That is a way we have in bad cases. If we can get a majority of men on the jury for us—hit or miss—we are all right. And if we have even one sure for us, then it will amount

to a disagreement, and that generally kills a case, or forces a new trial, which we can stave off till the witnesses are out of the way, or forget all they ever knew about the matter."

"Then you think you can beat the other side?"

"To be sure, sir! I make it a point to beat them in some way. If fair means will not do it, others must," said Mr Hourly, sipping his wine, quietly.

"And if we do beat them, can't I turn the tables on old Grossbeak, in some way?"

"O yes! You can then sue him for false and malicious imprisonment," said the lawyer.

"I'll do it—I'll do it, if it costs me a hundred dollars," said Mr Martin, excitedly.

"I have just been thinking of a good plan to help the case," said Mrs Desha,

"What is it?" asked the lawyer and merchant both in a breath.

"The 'Prometheus' is nearly ready for sea, and the shipping-agent is securing a crew for her. This I learned yesterday, when I went in disguise to ask the price of a passage in her to Europe, for I wanted to see the young captain, and see if there were any weak points there. I always look for weak points in men when there is anything in view. Now, I thought if the vessel could be set to leaking when she got to sea, so that she would damage her cargo, or perhaps even founder, it would help this case greatly."

"Why, bless your soul, madam, it would be the making of us. Mr Grossbeak and his suit might go to the devil then," said Mr Hourly.

"Well, with money, I can have it done," said Mrs Desha, with a triumphant look. "They have not secured a steward yet. I can send them one; and if I do, the ship will leak before she gets to the end of her voyage. Do you understand me, gentlemen?"

"Faith I do, as much as I ought to understand about the matter," said Mr Hourly. "You must have a man that you can trust, for if he were to betray you, it would be the worse for you in the end."

"I have just such a man in view," said Mrs Desha.

"How much money will it take?" asked Mr Martin, who understood her plan in a moment.

"Five hundred dollars now—five hundred more if he succeeds in wrecking the ship undiscovered."

"An awful sum these hard times," sighed Mr Martin.

"A good deal less than ten thousand dollars and costs, and it will make our case sure," said Mr Hourly.

"I agree to it, then," said Mr Martin. "When will the money be wanted?"

"The first thing in the morning," said Mrs Desha. "The moment I thought of the plan, I went to see the man whom I knew could carry it out, and he expects to hear from me in the morning, if he is to undertake it."

"You shall have the money," said Mr Martin, with a sigh. "I must beat Grossbeak, no matter what it costs!"

CHAPTER XX.

"WELL, Edgar, my lad, what news to-night?" asked Mr Grossbeak of the young captain, a night or two later than the date of our last chapter.

"I have come to report all ready for sea, sir," said Edgar. "The cargo is all in, crew shipped, and the vessel hauled off in the stream, ready to move with the first of the ebb in the morning."

"Good! You have made fine dispatch. I like it. Have you a good crew?"

"Above middling, sir. I have the old first and second mates of the 'Heliotrope,' and three or four of her crew. The rest are new hands to me. But all came aboard sober, and that is a good sign."

"Got any passengers to keep your cabin alive?"

"No, sir, I think not. A fussy old woman has been on board three or four times to ask my price and see the accommodations, but I hardly think she'll make her mind up to go with me. I hope not. I care but little for passengers, at any rate, and a nervous woman on board ship is my horror."

"Is that a gallant speech, Captain Martin?" said a cheery voice behind him.

Lizzie had just entered the room with her usual light step.

"Truth takes the place of gallantry, sometimes, Miss Lizzie," said Edgar, with a smile.

"You wouldn't object to a dozen romping girls like myself, for instance, taking passage with you?"

"I should, most unequivocally. I might keep one within bounds ; but a dozen would drive my crew into a mutiny, and my despairing self overboard."

"Well, I see that you are averse to having lady passengers. But perhaps you will not object to taking a beverage of which old women are reported to be very fond. I came to say that tea was ready."

"We'll go down in a few minutes, pet," said her father. "Go to that lower drawer in my secretary, dear, and bring me my large spy-glass, in the shark-skin case."

Lizzie obeyed, and brought the instrument.

"Edgar, I am going to make you a present of this glass," said the old gentleman. "A better glass never was held to a seaman's eye. But you must never part with it, nor the case."

"Of course not—a gift from you, sir, never shall leave my possession."

"The shark whose skin was used in making that case, and some other traps for me, came near making a meal from my body," continued the old gentleman.

"I shall value it a thousand times more, while I think of your escape," said Edgar.

"And, pet, you must give Edgar something to carry luck with him, when he sails," said Mr Grossbeak.

"I do not know what kind of a present would be suitable, father," said Lizzie, with a merry twinkle in her eyes. "Shall it be a pin-cushion, or a needle-case, or a copy of Robinson Crusoe, or—"

"Fiddle-sticks, pet ! you will have your fun.

Let us go to tea, and you may come to your senses while you preside over the table."

CHAPTER XXI.

As she promised, Mrs Desha, upon receiving five hundred dollars in gold from Mr Martin, on the morning after Mr Hourly's visit, went to see the person whom she had selected to act as the agent of mischief on board the "Prometheus."

She met him by appointment, in a "ladies' refreshment saloon" on Broadway; but as that was too public for the safety of an interview, she bade him call a hack, and they drove up town and out to one of the famous hotels on the Bloomingdale Road, where private rooms and suppers were ever to be had, and "no questions asked."

This man, whom Mrs Desha called Stanley, used but a few words, and they very commonplace, until he was alone with her in a private parlour of the hotel which they had selected. Then, in answer to her question, whether he had thought of her proposal, he replied that he had.

"Have you been to the vessel, or to the shipping-office?" she continued.

"To both," he replied. "They are willing to take me if I bring proper recommendations."

"Good. I can get them for you. Now, Mr Stanley, did you fully understand my proposition?"

"I believe I did, madam; but you can repeat it, and then I will be sure."

"The 'Prometheus,' if she ever reaches port,

must do it in a sinking condition. I do not wish you to act so as to lose your life, but you can set the vessel to leaking when you are near your port of destination."

Mr Stanley bowed. He was evidently not a man of many words.

"Now, if you will undertake this job, promising under no circumstances to betray me, I will give you five hundred dollars in gold. If you succeed, on your return to me, I will give you five hundred dollars more. Do you accept my proposition?"

"I do, madam," replied Stanley.

"Then here is the gold. You will need to procure large augurs, which can be concealed in your trunk. Your own sagacity will tell you when and what else to do."

And the lady handed him the money which Mr Martin had sorrowfully counted out to her that morning.

CHAPTER XXII.

DURING tea-time, it was agreed upon by Mr Grossbeak, with Edgar, that the former with Lizzie should take a pleasure-trip the next morning in the "Prometheus," as far down the bay as Sandy Hook, and leave with the pilot-boat to return home. This suggestion, coming from Mr Grossbeak, pleased Edgar very greatly, for he had "come to like" the society of Lizzie very, very much; and, as a matter of course, the more he could have of it, the better he was pleased. He lingered long that evening, for he felt loth to leave such pleasant company

for the solitude of his lonely berth on board ship.

"Wait a moment, Captain," said Lizzie, when she saw that he was preparing to leave. "I must not forget the present for *bonne fortune* that my father told me to give to you."

And, with a smile, she placed a small package in his hand. And bidding them *au revoir*—for they were to meet at the ship at sunrise—he left the house.

It is not to be supposed that grass grew under his feet between Bleeker-street and the Battery. His "'Prometheus' ahoy!" might have been heard clear across to Jersey City.

At last the boat came, and the laggard oarsman put him on board. His next act was to hurry to his state-room, and, after lighting the swinging lamp therein, to lock the door, and then open the package which Lizzie had given him.

A cry of delight came from his lips as her own sweet, laughing face met his view. A miniature painted on ivory was her gift, and with it a lock of her silken hair.

A paper accompanied the gift. Upon it was written: "This picture must be hung up to frighten witches away. The hair, if rats are troublesome on the ship, will infallibly drive them away, or poison them, if administered in small doses!"

LIZZIE."

"God bless her," said the young seaman. And he kissed the picture with a vehemence that would have startled the original; and then he hung it by its golden chain around his neck.

A gentle knock at his door now attracted

his attention. He opened it, and there stood his new steward, with a lamp in his hand.

"What is wanted, Stanley?" asked the captain.

"Nothing, sir; only, sir, I heard you when you came aboard; for I have slung my hammock by the pantry, so as to be handy when I am wanted; and I thought you might want something."

"I'm glad you came, steward, for all that. I want you to get an early breakfast, and let it be as nice as you can possibly make. The owner and his daughter will be on board at sunrise—they are going down as far as the Hook with us."

"Yes, sir. I can have ham and eggs, broiled chicken, omelette, mutton-chops, cold tongue, and beefsteak."

"Well, that will do. Be up early."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mrs ARMSTRONG could not be classed in the category of very nervous women—tender and delicate as she appeared to be; for after she had seen Guilia and Lucia carefully close the front curtains of the pavilion, and arrange for themselves couches in the outer apartment, she retired to the inner one, on that first night of her captivity, and, fatigued as she was, soon slept—and slept soundly. And she did not awake until disturbed by one of the sisters in the morning, who was arranging fresh flowers in the vases which adorned her toilet-table.

She rose and dressed herself, however, and

went into the other apartment, where a table, neatly covered with a white cloth, was supplied with a rich and delicate breakfast.

The two sisters waited upon her as attentively as if they had been born servants, and, when she had finished, removed the articles from the table, and excused themselves, while they went to breakfast with their brother.

Mrs Armstrong watched them when they went away, and saw them enter a pavilion, much like the one she occupied, between her and the encampment. But, true to his promise, though so near her, Ghibetti did not trouble her with his presence.

When the sisters returned, they found the lady engaged in reading, and seating themselves near her, with some embroidery, they worked in silence, so as not to disturb her. When at last she wearied of her work and laid it down, the eldest asked if she would like to take a walk.

Mrs Armstrong gladly assented to this, for ideas of escape ran so constantly in her mind, that she determined to lose no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the topography of the country around her.

After walking for at least a half-mile, the path suddenly came to a termination at the foot of a lofty wall of solid rock, from the crest of which the stream came pouring down in a shower of silvery foam and spray into a deep pool at its foot.

Over this precipice it was impossible to pass, and the brushwood to the right and left of the path was dense as a hedge. But the mossy hillock which surmounted the sides of the pool

just spoken of, made an admirable lounge, and Mrs Armstrong threw herself down in an easy attitude, and watched the spray and mist, until she was half asleep.

Meantime, Guilia had wrought a wondrously beautiful wreath from her collection of vines and flowers, and now, with a smile, she placed it upon the lady's head.

"You are very beautiful," said Guilia, as they walked along. "I do not wonder that my brother loves you."

Mrs Armstrong sighed, but made no reply.

"Why can you not love him? He is brave, handsome, and though now a bandit chief, he is of noble blood. What he is, a bad Government and unjust rulers have forced him to become. Were you to love him, he would leave this wild life, and become what you wished him to be."

"Did he tell you to say so to me?" asked Mrs Armstrong, suddenly confronting the girl.

"No;" replied Guilia. "He only asked this morning if you had rested well. But he had spoken of you to us before we saw you. He told us that you mourned a lost husband, buried in the deep sea, but he hoped to win your heart back from its dead regrets."

"He takes a strange way of doing it! Will a caged bird love its captor?"

"Yes—when time and kindness make it forget that it is a captive."

"Birds are unlike human beings, then!" said Mrs Armstrong.

And they returned to the pavilion in silence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE sun peeping over the heads of the drowsy Brooklynites had but just gilded the waters of New York Bay, where the East and North Rivers meet and embrace, when, true to "time," Mr Grossbeak and his daughter alighted from their carriage at the Battery gate. A keen eye had been looking through the lately-presented spyglass for them, and before they could get to Castle Garden steps a boat from the "Prometheus" was there, and her captain in it.

"Here we are, Edgar! Here we are, as fresh as larks, and as hungry as sharks," said Mr Grossbeak.

"Well, sir, breakfast will be on the table as soon as we are on board, and we'll have time to eat it before the tide turns, so that I can get under way."

And the young captain reached out his hand to assist Lizzie into the boat.

They soon pushed off, and in a few moments were alongside the ship. Lizzie rejoiced at everything she saw when she got on board; for it was new to her. They went down into the cabin, which had been newly and neatly painted.

"Is this your room, captain?" she asked, looking into Edgar's state-room. "Oh, I know it is, by the books, and a flute, too. But you have no pictures here. I expected to see a great many of them."

"I have but one picture, and that is here," said Edgar, in a low tone, pressing his hand upon his breast.

"Not even a looking-glass!" cried the mischievous girl, not seeming to hear what he said.

"You have not looked in the wash-room yet, where the conveniences for a toilet are to be found," said the captain, smiling. "But the breakfast is ready."

"Why, what a table you set!" exclaimed Lizzie. "How can you do so well, and have no female servants to cook for you?"

"Men have to learn," said the captain, with a smile, as he proceeded to help the daughter. "You must not think that we live always as well as this," said Edgar.

The breakfast was pleasantly got through with by the aid of such light conversation; and by the time it was over, the pilot, who had already breakfasted with the mates, came down to say that the ebb-tide was making.

"We'll go on deck, daughter, and see how Edgar handles his ship," said Mr Grossbeak.

The ship was white with canvas, from her truck down to the deck. And while the proud banner of free America floated from her mizen-gaff, a bright streamer floated from her main, and a broad burgee, with her name on it, from the fore.

And, standing stiffly erect, with her full cargo, the ship sailed proudly down the bay before a pleasant breeze from the northward and westward, which gave her flowing sheets.

And now she was under charge of the pilot, and the young captain had time to attend to Mr Grossbeak and his sweet child, who had looked with wondering eyes upon the manoeuvre.

vres which had so quickly put the vast mass in motion.

And many a person from the shore had watched her as she was got under way, and admired the masterly manner in which she was handled.

"Well, Miss Lizzie, you have seen a ship got under way. What do you think of it?" asked Edgar, as he joined her and her father.

"I think, if I was a boy, I'd be a sailor."

Lizzie said this, and then blushed, for she thought she might have said something improper. Changing the conversation, she asked:

"How is it possible for the men to go up so very high, without becoming dizzy?"

"They get used to it," said Edgar. "And they are taught when they first become topmen never to look down when they are in the upper yards. 'Look aloft' is a proverb with them."

"The craft is as stiff as a church," said Mr Grossbeak, admiringly. "She moves along the water, too, as if she had life in her. Ours will be a short trip, Lizzie. The ship smells the salt-water, and is in a hurry to kiss the face of the Atlantic."

"She may find that face in wrinkles before long," said Lizzie, who had grown suddenly serious. "If a heavy storm should rise, captain, what would you do?"

"Trim the ship to meet it, Miss Lizzie. All this spread of canvas would be snugly furled, and those lofty spars would be sent down and housed."

The captain did not notice that the steward was standing close by him, and, while he

listened, that a sardonic smile gathered on his thin features. But Lizzie did; and while she noted his peculiar look, an intuitive dread of, and dislike to, the man took possession of her.

Seeing her eyes keenly fixed upon him, and seeming to look into his very thoughts, Stanley coloured, and moved uneasily away.

"Have you known your steward long?" asked Lizzie of Edgar, after Stanley had gone out of sight.

"No! he has just been shipped. But he comes well recommended. Why do you ask the question?"

"Because—it may be folly, forgive it if it is—something tells me that he is a bad man, and will need watching. There is a lurking devil in his smile. I pray you to have a care of him."

Edgar smiled, and said, "Since you request it, I will closely watch his motions."

"Thank you. If he is not a snake in the grass, there never was one!" said Lizzie.

"Just one hour from the battery to the middle of the Narrows. She does it bravely—bravely, Edgar!" said the old gentleman, who had been too busy timing the vessel with his chronometer watch, to observe what had passed between Edgar and Lizzie.

"She sails well, sir. If this wind holds, I shall make a splendid passage out."

"Here we are close down to the west bank—I see the buoy. Jehosophat! how the old ship flies! In another hour we'll have to part company at this rate."

The old gentleman was a good judge of speed

and distance, for, in little more than an hour, after a brief parting, he and his daughter left Edgar to pursue his voyage, while they went on board the pilot-boat to return to the city.

CHAPTER XXV.

Nor until some time after he had discharged his pilot, and taken his bearings and distance, did Edgar give a second thought to the warning which Lizzie had given him about the steward.

Then, when having left the deck in charge of the second officer, who, like the first, was an old and trusty friend and seaman, he went down into the cabin, and began to ponder over her words.

The steward had brought many certificates of recommendation. He looked like a quiet and harmless man—had nothing to say to anyone without he was spoken to, and was clean, prompt, and attentive to his duty.

But Edgar thought he would look into him a little more closely. Calling him to fix some little matter about his state-room, he entered into a conversation with him, purposely to draw him out.

"You have never crossed the Atlantic, I think I understood you to say, Stanley?" said the captain.

"No, sir," replied the steward. "I've always been south and west in my business."

"They have rough weather on the lakes, sometimes, have they not?"

"Yes, sir; terrible. I have been wrecked there three times, and been near it a great

many more times. A storm comes up all of a sudden, and brings a short, tumbling sea with it, that salt-water sailors say is worse than they ever saw on the ocean."

"So I have heard. Well, you may have a chance to see a blow on the Atlantic before we see New York again, although it is not the stormy season. But a tight ship, well found, is under us, and I care not what gales come, if they are but fair ones."

"Yes, sir. What will you please to have for dinner, sir?"

"Use your own judgment, steward."

"Yes, sir." And the steward went forward to see about the materials for dinner, and to hold a consultation with the cook.

"I can see nothing dangerous in the man," soliloquized Edgar. "Neither in looks nor manner is he anything but common-place. I cannot see what Lizzie could discover that looked wrong. I reckon it was only a fancy of hers. It is a privilege of woman to be nervous, whimsy, and suspicious."

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Did you succeed in getting the man you intended to have join the 'Prometheus,' Mrs Desha?" asked Mr Martin when he came home weary, at night, from his business.

"Yes, sir. ☺ And he is already safe on board that vessel, well supplied with large augurs; and if she don't leak finely before she ever gets into another port, you may have my head for a football!" replied the widow.

"And you paid him the five hundred dollars, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir. It is a risky piece of business, and he would not stir a step without that much in advance."

"An awful sum in these hard times—an awful sum!" said Mr Martin, with a sigh.

"Are you not well, my dear?" asked his wife, thinking that he looked rather strangely.

"Yes; but so tired!" he said, with a sigh. "I've been glancing over invoices ever since eleven o'clock—ever so many!"

"Shall I not make you a nice punch?"

"No, I guess not. Sugar is awful dear, and on the rise. Lemons are three cents apiece, and hardly any in market. Oh dear! I don't see what we are coming to!"

"Well, tea is almost ready; and that may revive you."

"Tea is up, too. But I'm glad of that; I've two cargoes coming in, and shall make a grand spec! Yes, we'll have tea if it is up."

"You do not forget that Mr Hourly was to come and draw up your will this evening?" suggested Mrs Desha.

"So he was. I wonder what he'll charge?" sighed the old man.

"Not anything. He told me that he would do it for nothing, on my account," said the widow.

"Did he—did he? Why, really he is a fine fellow—a capital lawyer. Minna, when he comes, we'll have a little punch; but not too sweet, dear—not too sweet."

"Will yez be after comin' to tay?" cried

the frowsy-looking servant-girl, at this juncture.

"Yes, we'll have tea; and when Mr Hourly comes we'll fix the will. He, he! Ho, ho! He'll not charge anything for drawing it up!"

The sparingly-served meal was soon dispatched, and Mr Martin, who had become strangely nervous of late, returned with his wife and mother-in-law to the sitting-room.

In a short time, Mr Hourly came in; and writing materials were brought by Minna, who was very anxious to have that will made and recorded while Mr Martin was in a proper humour.

"I will write the usual preamble, and then you can state the items as you wish them inserted," said Mr Hourly.

"The preamble! What's that?" asked Mr Martin.

"The words preceding the items, usually written in this way: 'Now I, Levi Martin, Senior, being, by the Grace of God, in sound mind, do hereby make such disposition of my property, real and personal, as in my deliberate judgment I deem right and proper.' That, sir, is the preamble," said the lawyer, who had written down the words. "Now you can name the items."

"Let me think. I intend to cut off Edgar and his sister with one shilling each, in consequence of their disobedience to me."

"Very well, sir, I will write: 'I hereby bequeath to my son, Edgar, and to his sister, my daughter, the sum of one shilling each, and no more, because they have incurred my displea-

sire, by bad conduct and disobedience. And they are never hereafter, in any way, to share in any property of mine; for I utterly discard them for ever."

"Yes, yes," said the old man, huskily, "they deserve it—they deserve it. They are in league with my enemies!"

"Now, sir, to the next. Do you intend to leave anything to charitable associations? It is very fashionable to do so."

"Not a cent, sir—not a cent! D'ye think I'm a fool? No, sir. Charity begins at home. Write, that if I should die first (which I don't mean to if I can help it), that I leave every dollar of my money to my dear young wife and my infant son Levi."

"Who is the very image of his father," said Minna, gently.

"My wife is to have the use of all of it, real and personal, until Levi is twenty-one; and then she will set apart for his use one-half of it to place him in business."

"Yes, sir, that is written down," said the lawyer.

"Well, that's all. It's not so much of a job to write a will after all."

And the old merchant signed the will which was to leave his own children penniless, while it bequeathed his immense wealth to the woman who had sold her youth and beauty for it. It was duly witnessed; and then the lawyer folded it up, saying he would have it recorded, and then return it to Mr Martin.

"And now, Minna, since the job is over, we'll take that punch," said Mr Martin. "Be

careful not to make it too sweet or too strong, my dear."

"Yes, dear."

And the now-satisfied wife went to prepare his punch, little caring how soon death came to claim the old man and his dry bones.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DAY after day, with a fair and fresh wind, the gallant ship "Prometheus" sped on her voyage, with nothing to mar the pleasure of those on board until she was within three or four days' sail of the port of her destination.

Then the visits of Edgar to his barometer were frequent, for it fell so rapidly that he knew a heavy gale was brewing. Not only by that, but by many another "sign and token," which seamen only can read.

The crew were speedily made aware of what was coming by the orders to take in and stow all the light canvas.

"Look to your pantry, and stow away all the crockery not actually in use, steward," said the captain. "We are going to have a gale."

"Yes, sir; I see it looks blowy. I've made all secure, sir, in my department. Do you think it will come heavy, sir?"

"By the way the barometer has come down in the last two hours, I should think it would," said the captain, and he went on deck.

"My time is coming, and I don't like the work ahead of me a bit," said the steward. "But I have a good place to work in. My store-room down in the run, under the cabin,

's the very spot, and the last one where they will look for a leak. The holes I make will be far enough under water to escape notice long before the leak will be discovered by the captain or crew. Three or four days from port—that will do; I care not how heavy it blows. I must earn my thousand dollars. And if I don't make it ten, I'm a bigger fool than I take myself to be. With such a piece of work hanging over him, the employer will have to pay for keeping his secret, as well as for the job itself."

When Edgar went on deck, he found the chief mate, whose watch it was, already taking a second reef in the topsails, for the wind had increased to a gale.

"We're going to have it hot and heavy, captain," said the mate.

"Yes, I see we are. If it blows any harder, we'll take in the topsails and lay her head to wind under her trisails. We've a hard coast under our lee—far enough off as yet; but if the blow lasts, it may be too near before it is over."

"Ye, sir; I've seen a gale commence like this, which lasted a ship clear across the Atlantic."

"Well, we're snug for it. I'm sorry it came; we would have made a sixteen-day trip if it had not."

"Easy, sir—easy!" replied the mate. "Mind your helm, there, and don't let her look all over creation for a course!" he added, sharply, to the helmsman.

"The sea astern, sir, kicks her about so

that one man at the wheel has more than he can do to keep her nose to one pint," said the old seaman who stood at the helm.

"Morris is right—put another man with him," said the captain. "And you may as well call all the hands and furl the topails. The wind is gathering strength all the time, and the sooner we have the craft laid to, the easier it will be for her and the men."

"Ay, ay, sir."

In a half-hour more the ship was under her fore and main tri-sails, her yards pointed to the wind, and she nearly head to sea, rising and falling on the long, white-capped swells, as gracefully as a lady of the "olden school" courtesying through a cotillion.

Finding all snug, the captain now went below to enjoy a new book which he had been reading, for he used all opportunities that were allowed him to improve his mind and store it with useful knowledge.

For awhile his book engaged his attention, and then he took down his chart, upon which his run so far had been carefully pricked out, and examined his situation attentively.

This done—leaving orders to be called if there was occasion—he retired to his stateroom, for night had drawn her sable pall athwart the sky. *

Not directly to sleep, but to take Lizzie's picture from his bosom, and to study over each pleasing feature of her face—to try with the silken tress of her hair, and to wonder if the original of that picture, heiress of so much wealth, would ever love the discarded son of

his father—whether he would ever call her wife and press her to his bosom.

After awhile he opened a drawer, and took from it another picture, that of a female, whose marked resemblance to himself told her relationship.

"Sweet sister!" he murmured, as he gazed upon it. "Would to heaven that I knew where you are! Whether, at least, you are alive or dead. Cruel and heartless, indeed, were they who could drive you out into the wintry world—cold to all, much more to one so fragile as you were."

And tears dimmed his brave eyes, for his heart-strings were wound around many sweet memories of her.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ANOTHER day rose on a storm-swept sky, a storm-lashed sea, a storm-tossed ship. And as the young captain looked over the log-slate to see her drift and course during the night, and then went and pricked it off on the chart, a shade of anxiety came out upon his face.

"She makes a terrible sight of lee-way," he said to the second mate, who stood looking over the chart with him.

"Yes, sir. Not quite so sharp built as the old 'Heliotrope' was; hasn't got much hold in the water."

"If she drifts this way twenty hours longer," we'll be on the French coast," said Edgar.

"I think the gale will break before that time, sir. It is blowing just about as hard as

it can now. It can't keep up such a heat a great while."

"No—not naturally. But we must keep an eye out for the worst. I hope we'll have it clear for a noon observation. There may be currents on this coast which will throw us wide of our reckoning."

The captain now closed his chart and went on deck again. The wind blew so furiously that the fore tri-sail went into ribbons, and the main seemed to fairly strain the bolt ropes. The ship, with care, was kept head to wind and sea, but only with care.

"I was just getting a drag out ahead, sir," said the first officer. "If the old ship should get the better of us and pay off into the trough of the sea, it would make bad work."

"Yes; you are right. The sooner a drag is on her, the better," replied the captain. "She seems to pitch more heavily than she did."

The carpenter at this moment came aft. He was a staunch and brave old tar, who had been on many a voyage with Edgar. Now his face was pale and anxious; but there was no tremour in his voice when he said:

"The ship seemed to work loggy like, sir, and I sounded the pumps just now. She is leaking terribly, sir, the line marks over four feet of water in the hold."

"Leaking! why, she hasn't strained enough for that," cried the captain.

"You can see for yourself, sir; my report is true. I've not spoken of it to the men."

"All hands to the pumps!" came startlingly upon the ears of the crew of the "Prome-

theus." Accustomed to obeying orders without asking questions, they sprung with alacrity to the work, and soon two streams from her pumps were bulging through her scupper-holes.

For an hour the men worked steadily, and then the captain sent the carpenter to sound the well, and told him to come down quietly into the cabin and report to him there.

The carpenter came, and his face wore a gloomy look.

"Four feet four inches in the well, sir," said he. "She gains on the pumps, sir."

"Can you not find where she leaks?"

"No, sir, I cannot. The leak is below the line of water somewhere, for I cannot hear its rush."

"That is bad."

The first mate came down, and reported that the wind was evidently lulling.

"Very good, sir, I am glad to hear it," said the captain. "The moment that she can bear sail, we must put it on her and run for our port, for that is the nearest under our lee. It will be a mercy if we can keep her afloat until we get in. She gains on the pumps."

"I know it, sir; if we could only know where she leaked we might get some canvas into the hole. It is strange to me what set her to making water. She was docked the last time she came into port, and reported sound as a nut. I was told so by the insurance men."

"Some plank butt has started or she has opened in the bows, somewhere," said Edgar. "You had better put the men to the pumps in

watches, and let them relieve each other every two hours. Give the watch that comes off a gill of brandy to a man—they will work the better for it."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"This is a bad sight for Havre, sir, isn't it?" said the steward, very despondent in tone and look.

"Yes, Stanley, it is. But we will hope for the best. We are not many leagues from port, and may keep the ship afloat until we get in."

"There are boats enough to save the people, are there not, sir?" asked the steward.

"Yes—if boats could live. But in such a sea as there is on now, a boat would be swamped in a minute."

"Bad, sir—very bad," and the steward shook his head. "Shall I mix you a toddy, sir?"

"No. I need a clear head, if ever," said the captain. "I give the men drink to sustain their overtaxed physical natures. They need it—I do not."

"If we have to take to the boats, sir, is there anything you wish me to save for you, sir?"

"I will tell you in time, steward. I shall never order a boat out while there is a chance of saving the ship."

And the captain took down his chart and anxiously looked out his then position.

"I think we can risk her under the fore-sail and maintop-sail before the wind," said the chief mate, from the head of the companion-ladder.

"Very well; I will be on deck in a few minutes, and see to it."

When the captain went on deck, he found the gale much broken, and with care, after cutting away the drag, they got the ship's head off before the wind and got two of the square sails on her. He again went below, making a sign for the carpenter to sound the bell and follow him.

"How much water now, Mr Blocks?" he asked.

"Four feet eight inches," said the carpenter, dolefully; "and the pumps doing their best, sir. The chances look dark."

"So they do, my man; but it will never do to give up. Take a glass of brandy, and wear a more cheerful look when you go on deck. The men must never see such a wo-begone face as that."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE room in which the Court of Special Sessions was held in New York was crowded to overflowing, for there was an unusual interest evinced by the public to witness the trial of the wealthy merchant, Levi Martin, on the charge of maliciously injuring his neighbour, Martin Grossbeak, by slandering him and his property.

This suit was not the civil one for damages, but the criminal complaint.

Mr Hourly was in his glory. For, like most of his stubborn race, he gloried in opposition. And he had it powerfully. The district attorney, the gifted Ogden Hoffman, was aided by the equally talented Graham.

The district-attorney opened the case briefly.

but pointedly, stating the law of libel and slander as laid down in the books. By these he proved that Mr Martin had gone to various insurance men, shippers, and others, and represented that the "Prometheus" was unsound and unseaworthy, and that the plaintiff, knowing this, only sent her to sea that he might lose her and get her value from the insurance offices, thus defrauding them by pretending that she was sound when she was not so. Also, that he had placed an incapable young man in charge of the ship, a minor, whom it was not safe to trust with property, thus inducing shippers not to put freight in the ship. And that this was done maliciously to injure the plaintiff, because he had taken the defendant's son into his employ after he, the defendant, in a fit of rage, had discarded him.

The district-attorney rested the case here, stating that he should claim the privilege of introducing one more witness, during any stage of the trial, if he should arrive before all the evidence closed on both sides.

Mr Hourly now arose, and with a grand flourish commenced a peroration upon the right of free speech in a free country, which was intended to completely dazzle the jury. He then threw the charge of malice back into the teeth of the prosecution, and said that they showed malice in suing for heavy damages in another court, and prosecuting his wealthy and respectable client as a criminal her. He closed by saying that he intended to prove that the "Prometheus" was unseaworthy, and that his client had told the truth.

And he eyed the prosecuting attorney with a look of haughty triumph, as he said this.

He called for his witnesses several merchants belonging to prominent firms in the city. When they were sworn, the only question he asked them was :

"Did they consider the paper known as 'Lloyd's Shipping List' a reliable means of information, and would they believe its reports?"

Of course they would, for Lloyd had been standard with them for years.

"Then, may it please the honourable court, and you, gentlemen of the jury," said Mr Hourly, exulting in both look and tone, "I beg leave to read a statement from that paper, just received by the last steamer, and also to have it filed with the records of this case. It is as follows :

"HAVRE, 10th Aug.—The ship 'Prometheus,' Martin master, of New York, with cotton to master, has just arrived at this port in distress, being in a sinking condition, having sprung a leak at sea."

This information seemed to come like a shock of thunder and lightning upon the court, jury, and audience, for the first witnesses called had testified to the soundness and good character of the ship. But the district-attorney and his colleague took the matter very coolly.

"After this, your honour, I see no need of my making any defence," continued Mr Hourly. "The rotten, leaking ship has told her own story, and I feel that I can count upon the triumphant acquittal of my much-injured client, without a doubt."

The district-attorney arose, with a quiet smile, after Mr Hourly sat down, and taking another newspaper from his pocketsaid, addressing the court :

“This is rather a novelty in the way of evidence, your honour, introducing a foreign paper as a witness, but it is not for us to object, as justice may be forwarded by it. Another vessel has arrived since the packet which brought Lloyd’s convenient ‘Shipping List’ to Mr Hourly, bringing a supplement of that valuable paper, from which I will read an extract, which may also as well be filed with the other. It is as follows :

“The ship ‘Prometheus,’ before reported leaking, having been relieved by the aid of two powerful steam-pumps, her leaks were discovered to proceed from several large augur-holes which had been bored in her, aft, in a store-room, in the run, used by the steward. The latter, a man named Stanley, escaped from the ship as soon as she arrived in port, but the augur with which the work had been done being found concealed in his trunk, search was made for him by the police, and he was arrested while applying for a passage to England in disguise. He confessed that he had been employed in New York by the captain’s own father to sink the ship. It seems too incredible for belief. The villain is to be sent home in irons, in the first ship, for trial. The ‘Prometheus,’ being sound in every respect, will be ready for sea again, on having her augur-holes plugged up.”

“Now !” cried the district-attorney, “if the defence is ready to let the case go to the jury,

with this double proof of perfidy and deadly malice on the part of the defendant, I am !”

Mr Hourly was dumb—utterly dumb with surprise! A bustle occurred in the further part of the court-room. A lady had fainted and was being carried out. That lady was Mrs Desha. Mr Martin, senior, was not in court; if he had been, he, too, might have fainted. Being a rich criminal, he was supposed to be there by the presence of his counsel. Had he been a poor one, he would have occupied the prisoner's dock.

At last, however, Mr Hourly's brazen impudence conquered his surprise.

“On second thought, your honour,” said he, “I think the paper would not be proper to introduce as evidence.”

The “court” could not restrain a smile. A titter ran through the court-room, forcing the officers in attendance to cry “Silence!” more than once.

The district-attorney laughed outright.

“My learned friend on the opposite side,” said he, “feels that the evidence which he wished to introduce tells too strongly against him. Ignoring the papers altogether, I will introduce the witness whom I alluded to, as being necessary to call, if I could produce him in time. The United States deputy-marshal will oblige me by introducing the prisoner, Stanley, late steward of the ‘Prometheus.’”

Stanley, who was held in custody in an ante-room, was brought in.

“I'll not have him examined!” cried Mr Hourly, pale with rage and mortification. “He's a criminal, and in custody!”

"What he is, your client has made him, Mr Hourly," said the district-attorney. "I wish his evidence! And it will be best for him now and hereafter to give it plainly and truthfully!"

Stanley did so. His only hope was to be permitted to turn State's evidence in a trial for conspiracy, which would involve Mr Martin and Mrs Desha.

His evidence was unshaken by the cross-examination of Mr Hourly.

Mr Hourly saw that there was no chance for his client. He took up his hat and papers, and did not wait for the certain verdict of the jury against him.

That verdict was given without the jury leaving their box. The judge gave the sheriff orders to have Mr Martin produced for sentence in the morning, and then adjourned the court.

CHAPTER XXX.

"BAD news flies fast." Before Mr Martin reached home on the evening of the trial, he learned that the criminal trial had gone against him. But of the immediate cause, and the unexpected evidence, he as yet had not heard. And, of course, he was not in the best of humours when he got there.

Mrs Desha, being restored to consciousness after her fainting-fit, was brought home in a carriage, and there Mr Martin found her, almost dead with terror.

"Where have you been? What is the mat-

ter with you?" asked the merchant, roughly, as the palid-looking woman sat wringing her hands, and sighing as if the little heart which she had was breaking.

"I have been to the court!" she replied, in a moaning tone.

"Yes; and your favourite lawyer, the great Mr Hourly, instead of winning my case, as he said he would, has lost it—curse him—has lost it."

"He could not help it! Providence was against us!"

"Providence? What the devil has that to do with law and juries?" cried Mr Martin, with a sneer.

"In this case it upset all his plans. He had everything right for you—he was just going to leave the case to the jury, when the opposite side introduced a witness which defeated everything. I was so shocked and horror-struck that I fainted in my seat."

"Who was the witness? What did he testify to of so much importance? Speak up, and let me know."

"It was Stanley, the late steward of the 'Prometheus,' returned, in irons, and ready to testify to anything against us, to save his own worthless neck."

Mr Martin turned almost blue; he was more than ashy pale. Tottering to a seat, he gasped for breath. His wife, alarmed, hastened for a glass of spirits, which she placed to his lips, and, holding his head back, forced him to swallow. After a little time, he revived some.

"Did his—did the evidence of that tool of

yours turn the case against me?" he asked, fixing his eyes savagely upon Mrs Desha.

"Yes—yes, I suppose it did," she stammered.

"Curse him! curse you! curse everybody!" shouted the man, raging like a maniac. "I'm ruined! ruined! The civil case, with damages and costs, will, of course, go against me now. And in the criminal suit I will be fined and imprisoned! and all for being a fool, and taking your advice. Out of my house, you black witch—out of my house, before I go beside myself, and throttle you!"

"Hallo! What is up here, Mr Martin? Does the law sit hard on your stomach?"

These words, in a hearty tone, came from the lips of Mr Orser, the deputy-sheriff, who, finding the front door wide open, and hearing the loud and angry voice of Mr Martin within, had entered unannounced.

"What do you want here?" shouted Martin, madder than ever.

"I want you on this bench-warrant!" said Mr Orser, quietly.

"I am on bail, sir—on bail for three thousand dollars, sir!"

"You was—but you are not now! Your bail has given you up, and the judge has issued this little piece of paper, commanding me to take you wherever I find you, and to hold you in safe custody until he can pass sentence upon you."

"What—what will be the sentence?" asked Martin, shaking as if an ague had come suddenly upon him.

"I can't say, exactly. The judge is pretty

wolfish about your hiring a man to sink a ship in which your own son and other good men were sailing, and I think he'll give you all the law will allow."

"And that?"

"Is one year at breaking stone, and other light work, on Blackwell's Island, and a thousand dollars fine! And the district-attorney is getting up another indictment for the grand jury to act on, about your hiring the steward to sink your son's ship."

"Lost! lost!" moaned the wretched old man. "Sheriff, you will not drag me from the bosom of my family to-night, will you?"

"I should like to be as lenient as possible with a gentleman in your situation," said the officer, kindly; "but I have positive orders from headquarters to lock you up."

"Well, if it must be so, it must!" said the old man, with a groan. "Minna, get some wine, or brandy, if he prefers it, for the sheriff. You will allow me, sir, to go to my bed-room to change some articles of clothing—will you not?"

"Certainly, sir; but I warn you not to try to escape, for I have officers on the watch outside."

"You need not fear it, sir. I will be at your disposal in a very few moments," said the old man; and he staggered off to his chamber, acting more like a person under the influence of opium than otherwise.

Mrs Martin hastened out of the room for the refreshments which her husband had ordered for the officer. She came with them in a minute

or two, and was in the act of passing a glass to Mr Orser, when the heavy report of a gun or pistol was heard up stairs, and then the sound of a heavy fall.

"O Heaven! He kept loaded pistols in his bed-room, for fear of robbers! He has shot himself!" screamed Mrs Martin.

"Show me where his bed-room is, madam," said the sheriff, putting his untasted glass on the table.

Minna led the way; and, in a minute more, the officer, herself, and her mother stood in the presence of death!

"O Heaven! my husband, my husband!" screamed Mrs Martin, as she threw herself down upon his body.

"This is bad—a coroner must be summoned at once," said the sheriff. "I will go down and send one of my officers for one, if you will stay here with her."

These words were addressed to Mrs Desha, who, much horrified, yet preserved her presence of mind, and bowed an acquiescence to his wish.

Meantime, Mrs Martin made the old house ring with her screams.

"Get up, and don't make a fool of yourself," cried Mrs Desha. "His will is made, and now you are a rich woman! Don't carry on so when there's nobody here but me."

Minna evidently thought this good advice, for she cooled off in a moment, and began looking in her husband's pockets for his keys and money, for she feared that they might be kept by the coroner.

She took them just in time to escape the observation of the sheriff, whose heavy steps were heard coming upstairs; and now she renewed her wild lamentations without being reproved by her mother.

"Had you not better persuade her to go to some other room," said the officer, who entered with two or three companions. "I and my friends will remain with the body until the coroner comes. It is too terrible for a young thing like her to look upon."

Mrs Desha took the advice of the kind-hearted officer, and tried to persuade Minna to go with her to another room.

"No, no!" I will not leave my dear, murdered husband!" sobbed the agonized (?) wife. "I will die, too, and be buried with him."

The sheriff, who knew much of human nature as developed in man, had never made woman his study, and believed all this to be the reality of anguish. And, with his heart full of pity, he assisted Mrs Desha to carry the poor wife into another chamber, where he left her mother to use proper restoratives; and he returned to the room, where the suicide still lay drenched in his gore.

"You've done up the agony pretty well; but I'd hold up now, or you'll make yourself sick in earnest," said Mrs Desha to Minna, who recovered from her faint without the use of restoratives, as soon as the officer had got out of hearing.

"How lucky we were in getting him to make his will!" said Minna, after her mother had closed and locked the door. "I had no idea of

his going off so sudden, and in this way ; but he was taking to drink so fast that I thought it would soon floor him. If it was not for the will, the son and daughter would come in for shares of his property. Now, they are welcome to one shilling each, out of between four and five millions of dollars ! ”

“ And the ‘ image of his father,’ what shall we do with him ? ” said Mrs Desha, with a meaning look.

“ Oh ! he must follow his father as soon as possible ! ” replied Minna, coolly. “ The measles, scarlet fever, hooping-cough, diphtheria, smallpox, or some other blessing, must take off the brat. I don’t want to be bothered with him ; and yet, he must die a natural death. ”

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE coroner’s inquest which sat over the body of Levi Martin was a necessary formality, but its business was soon despatched.

The witnesses examined were Mr Orser and Mrs Desha ; and the verdict was that the deceased, Levi Martin, merchant, came to his death from the effects of a pistol-shot wound inflicted by his own hand, while in a state of temporary insanity, &c., &c., &c.

After the coroner had handed Mrs Desha the usual permit of burial, the house was cleared of the crowd of curious, impertinent rabble, who always gather in where a murder has been done, or a suicide committed ; and Mr Orser having done this, with his officers, returned to his

office, to write a return on the back of his warrant, far different from that which he had expected to when he went to Mrs Martin's house.

And the reporters—happy over a tragic incident to enrich the columns of the papers for which they toiled through the highways and byways of the city—repaired to Lovejoy's, to take one general "imbibation" in honour of the event; then patronised Dick Marshal, in the coffee-and-cake line; when, being sufficiently stimulated for the effort, they proceeded to get up their respective articles on the event of the evening.

These articles were read by astonished thousands in the city, and by many who had intended to attend at the court-room that day, to see whether a wealthy criminal would receive the same kind of justice that would have been meted out to one who aggravated his crime by being poor.

When the court was opened, the deputy-sheriff handed his warrant, with its return written on the back, to the judge.

The latter read it, and stated that he had already heard, unofficially, of the act which had removed the defendant, in the case of the "People vs. Martin," beyond the jurisdiction of an earthly judge.

"Out of commiseration for his distressed family, whom we can in no way hold amenable for the acts of the late head of that family, the Court will make no comments upon the trial of the deceased, or even say what would have been his sentence had he stood before us alive at this hour. But the court would distinctly state,

while it holds the scales of justice in its hand, that the same law and the same justice shall reach the wrong-doer, whether he rolls in untold wealth or be a ragged beggar from the streets—that if the Court makes the slightest difference in a case, it will be in favour of the poor unfortunate whose necessity, perhaps, more than his natural inclination, has impelled him to crime.

“The court is now open for any other cases which the district-attorney may have on hand.”

Mr Hourly, who evidently had expected to hear more from the judge about his late client, sat pale and nervous in his seat; and when a new case was called up, with which he had no connection, he rose and left the room, and hurried across Chatham-street to another bar, at which he was a steady practitioner, and took “something stiff,” to steady his nerves with.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It was a custom with Mr Grossbeak to read the morning paper while he sipped his coffee and ate his toast and its accompaniments at the breakfast-table, communicating its most startling or interesting contents to his daughter, who presided at the coffee-urn, and commenting thereupon as he digested both food and paper.

On the morning after the death of Levi Martin, he had tasted his coffee, placed a mutton chop and some browned, fried potatoes on his plate, and buttered his toast, when the servant, who usually attended to that part of the busi-

ness, placed the paper, yet damp from the press, on the table before him.

"Ah, the news? It is time that we heard from the 'Prometheus,' if Edgar has made a quick passage," said the old gentleman, looking at once into the well-known corner which contains the shipping news.

"And here she is—Havre—the 'Prometheus,'" he continued, taking a sip at his coffee. "Thunder and Mars!" he added, as his eye glanced nervously over the article.

"What is the matter, father? Any accident to the ship, or any one on board?" asked Lizzie, nervously.

"The d—d scoundrel! The smooth-faced infernal villain!" continued Mr Grossbeak, more and more excited as he continued to read.

"Who is a villain—not Edgar, surely?" asked Lizzie, whose curiosity now amounted almost to an agony.

"He ought to be hung from the yard-arm, without judge or jury!" continued the old gentleman, red with anger and nervousness.

Lizzie began to look like crying.

"Father, I do wish you'd tell me who you are talking about?" she cried, with an earnestness that at last secured his attention.

"Why, the steward of the 'Prometheus,' child!" said he. "The rascal bored augur-holes in the run of the ship, going out, and tried to sink her. But Edgar got her in, bless his brave soul. Edgar got her in, and the steward has been sent home in irons to be tried. The scoundrel says he was hired to do it by Levi Martin."

"Is it possible, father?"

"So the paper says, child. Old Martin is equal to anything when he sets his mind upon it! But to deliberately hire a man to sink a ship with his own son in it is more than I thought he would do!"

"When is the ship coming home, father?"

"The paper does not say, but most likely as soon as that cargo is out and another in. He will not be a great while behind the news."

"I warned him of that steward, father, on the day he sailed."

"Did you, child? I heard nothing of it."

"No; you were busy timing the speed of the ship when I spoke to him. I noticed the evil expression of the man's face, and told Edgar that I felt sure he was a bad man, and needed watching."

"Ay? And what said Edgar to that, pet?"

"That the man had come well recommended, but that he would keep a look-out upon his actions."

"He should have done so—for the steward was so sharp that he came near losing the ship. But she is saved. and old Martin has placed himself in a pretty position before the world. Let me see—his trial was on yesterday—we'll see how it went."

And the merchant turned from the shipping news to the law intelligence.

"He has been found guilty!" he said. "Poor devil, I am half sorry for him! The act about the ship will ruin him with merchants."

And Mr Grossbeak took a sip of coffee and a

bite from his toast. Then his eye ran over the part of the paper headed "City Intelligence." Suddenly, he dropped the cup which he was raising to his lips, spilling its contents over the white table cloth.

"My God!" he ejaculated; and he turned pale, as if a sudden sickness had come over him.

"What is the matter, father—what is the matter?" cried Lizzie, alarmed at his deathly pallor.

"You read it, Lizzie—I cannot. My head is dizzy with the thought. You read it, my pet."

And he pushed the paper toward her.

"Read what, father?"

"About Levi Martin's suicide," he replied in a husky tone. "I see that he shot himself last night."

And Lizzie took up the paper and read the account as we have already given it.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WE left Mrs Peters and Eliphalet, her manservant, rather abruptly, climbing the mountain, after the unfortunate encounter with the Italian brigands.

After two hours of slow and tedious driving, they reached the crest of the mountain, and a rapid descent of a mile or two more brought them to the post-house, where they were entitled to a change of horses.

It was one of the most miserable-looking houses of entertainment which they had yet met with, the only human beings who appeared

when Eliphalet rattled up before the door, being an elderly woman, a raw-looking gaunt boy of sixteen or eighteen years, and a barefooted, bare-legged girl, not much his junior.

Hitherto Mrs Peters had found the French language, which Mrs Armstrong spoke very fluently, all-sufficient to hold conversational intercourse with the people on the road. But neither she, nor either of her present attendants spoke it or Italian; and now she was troubled to make her wants known.

The woman of the house, who saw that the usual post-rider was absent, evidently knew that something had happened; but what it was Mrs Peters could not inform her. In her endeavour to do so, after she had alighted and entered the cheerless house, she mentioned the name of Ghibetti.

The woman of the house crossed herself as she repeated the name of "Ghibetti," and seemed to wonder that one of the party had escaped with their lives.

Eliphalet, who, after seeing his lady safely into the house, had turned his attention to the horses, now came in and asked Mrs Peters if she had not ordered something to eat for herself, for they had taken a very early breakfast, and had taken nothing since, and it was now near night.

"I have two reasons for not ordering anything, Eliphalet," said the lady, with a sad smile. "First, the brigand did not leave me a dollar—next, I cannot make the woman understand a word I say."

"As to the money, Miss Peters, I guess

we're not quite dead broke yet. The tarnation mean cuss thought I wasn't worth robbin' of anythin' 'ceptin my weepsons, and so I've got over a hundred dollars in hard cash on hand at your sarvice," said the honest-meaning Yankee. "And," he continued, "I reckon I can make 'em understand what we want."

And he made sundry odd motions with his mouth, indicating a desire to eat, by snapping his jaws together; and to drink, by throwing his head back and opening his mouth and swallowing unmeasured quantities of air, and then shaking a buckskin purse, which jingled like gold and silver, in her ears. She appeared to understand him; and the bare-legged girl was put to work to cook some maccaroni and eggs; and the boy was seen decapitating a couple of chickens very soon afterwards; and the old woman set out a table, upon which nice white bread, wine, salt, butter, and the universal garlic, made their appearance in a little while.

When the meal was ready, Mrs Peters insisted upon Eliphalet and Kate sitting and eating with her, which she had not done while Mrs Armstrong was with her.

Eliphalet was inclined to back out from this offer; but at last he gave in, and sat down, filling the place of carver and server admirably well.

They had just finished their meal. When the former drivers of the carriage and cart, accompanied by a troop of fifteen or twenty Government carbineers, galloped up.

"Where are the robbers?" asked the officer

in charge of the troop, who spoke some English.

"You kin ask, but tellin' ain't so easy," said Elphalet. "Whether they riz up, or whether they went down, where sich as they properly belong, is more than I kin tell. They went all of a suddint, and to save my life I couldn't say where."

"Do you know who commanded them?" continued the officer.

"The chap said his name was Ghibetti," said Elphalet.

"Ghibetti!" said the officer, uneasily. "Then a large force of them are at hand. We are no match for them."

"I should reckon not. But if you was in the United States of America, I reckon the whole neighbourhood would turn out on a wolf-hunt after such a scaly set of wimmen-robbers."

"How can I possibly effect the release of the lady-companion whom this bold robber has carried off?" asked Mrs Peters, of the officer.

"I do not know, signora," said the officer. "If my troop was large enough, I would scour the mountains for her. But Ghibetti is so powerful that we seldom can concentrate a force fit to meet him; and then he suddenly changes his quarters, and we next hear of him far away, in some other part of the country. This is his first robbery on this road for a long time."

"I offered to ransom the lady, but he would not listen to me," said Mrs Peters.

"He is as wilful and as capricious as if he

were an emperor or a pope, signora," said the officer. "The next stage will carry you to the town where the governor of this district resides. You can lay your case before him; and you may say to his excellency, that if he will send me a hundred more men I will search for the robbers, and try to rescue the lady. My name is Antonio Bardotti, lieutenant of carabinieri."

"I will tell him," said Mrs Peters. "And if you do rescue the lady, I will divide the ransom among you and your men which I would have paid the robbers for her release."

"If his excellency will but send me the reinforcements I ask, I will try," said the officer.

"I s'pose, Miss Peters, since these brave creeturs of drivers have come, we may as well have 'em hitch up and drive on," said Eliphalet.

"Yes," replied the lady.

"If the signora thinks it necessary, I will escort her for some distance," said the officer, "although you soon leave the forest, and reach a thickly-settled country."

"I think there will be no necessity to trouble you," said the lady, as she thought of the paper which Ghibetti had given her, and which she now exhibited to the lieutenant.

The latter read it.

"Ghibetti is a strange man!" said he. "None of his band would dare to molest you with that safeguard in your possession. With a price on his head, he often, alone, in various disguises, visits our cities. He has spies and friends everywhere. But I see that your carriage is ready. Adio, signora!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE very next day after his death, the body of Mr Martin was placed in a cheap coffin, by order of Mrs Desha, who took the ordering of matters upon herself, in consequence of the illness (?) of her daughter, and hurried off to a lot which he owned in a fashionable cemetery—only one carriage following the hearse, and that containing Mrs Desha and Mr Hourly, who was now duly appointed the agent for settling up the affairs of the estate in the name of Mrs Minna Martin, administratrix.

This proceeding so shocked the few friends of Mr Martin, who would have called upon the widow, that they did not do so now; and many were the comments upon this outrage on common decency.

And the comments were not less when it was discovered that high revel was constantly held in the old house—that wine and game suppers were of nightly occurrence, and that the young widow had recovered from her severe illness as soon as the body of her unfortunate husband had been placed under ground.

The will was now placed on probate at the surrogate's office, the administratrix little dreaming that there would be any opposition to it, or any hindrance to her at once entering upon the sole possession and use of her late husband's property. She even caused a bill to be posted on the old house in Pearl-street, offering it for sale.

But, suddenly, to her immense annoyance and chagrin, notice was given to her, through

the proper channel, that the will would be contested by Edgar Martin, yet a minor, through his next friend, Mr Martin Grossbeak. Also, notice in no manner or way to dispose of any of the property of the late Levi Martin, until the said will was fully decided upon.

"This will hinder our trip to Europe--will it not?" said Mrs Desha, as she indignantly heard the news, over a glass of the late Mr Martin's much-valued wine.

"As you are one of the witnesses to the will, it is necessary that you should be here."

"Well, I hope it will soon be over! I long to see London, and Paris, and life--*life!*" cried the dashing widow. "We have the means to live now, and I am tired of a bare existence!"

"I wish that Stanley's case was safely disposed of," said Mr Hourly. "I'm afraid that he will give us trouble yet."

"Why, you say that he only implicated Mr Martin, and not me," said Mrs Desha.

"True; he has not yet implicated you, madam, but he will, if he does not see his own way clear of the scrape."

"The graceless villain! Why, what a treacherous fellow he is! But he cannot prove it," said the lady, as she coolly sipped another glass of wine.

"Did you not write a note to him, saying that you wished to meet him at a certain saloon on Broadway on important business?"

"Yes, I think I did."

"And that note was dated?"

"I presume so. I generally date my notes and letters."

"Well, it is likely, from his air of assurance, that the note is yet in existence."

The lady bit her lips in vexation till the red blood ran from them.

"And he might have had—I do not say he did have, a witness or witnesses concealed somewhere, to witness the bargain made between you and him, intending in future to draw largely upon Mr Martin, for the keeping of the secret."

"But I only acted as an agent for Mr Martin in the business," said Mrs Desha.

"I know that, and in so doing became as much an accomplice in the crime as the main instigator or the attempted perpetrator! And, if I remember correctly, madam, you were in verity the original instigator of the plan."

"Nobody but you, and Minna, and the old man knew it," said the widow, quickly. "But that is neither here nor there, just now. How can we clear Stanley? That is the question."

"I see but one way," said the lawyer.

"What is that, Mr Hourly!"

"To get him out of prison in some way. Either by bail, or by bribing his keepers. And now I'll bid you good evening, madam, as I've an appointment at my office with Mr Brown, the late chief clerk of Mr Martin."

"Good evening, sir; call often, and as soon as you can. I shall be fearfully nervous and all anxiety until these matters are settled and I can know definitely when we can start for Europe."

"Doubtless, madam." And, with a low bow, the lawyer departed.

"I'll soon rid myself of that mean dastard, Stanley," said the widow, after the door closed.

"How, mother?" asked the young widow, with apparent curiosity.

"Why, if they allow him to receive presents of fruit, and wine, and cigars, all of which will be luxurious to him there, will it not be easy to use a little medicine in one of his bottles of wine, which will make him suddenly and for ever forgetful of the past, insensible to the present, and dead to the future?" asked the widow, quietly.

"Do you mean poison, mother?" asked Minna, with a shudder.

"Why, yes! Which would be the worst? For him to die like a recreant dog as he is, or for me to be consigned to a prison-cell?"

"But, mother, if it were found out that you sent the wine and fruit?"

"I would not send it."

"How would it get to him?"

"I would take it to the prison myself, so disguised as an old woman that even you would not know me. I talked to Mr Edgar Martin an hour in that disguise once, on board his vessel, and I'll wager anything that he took me to be seventy years old, almost deaf, very weak-sighted, and awfully addicted to snuff. You don't know half what your mother can do; yet, child, I made your fortune sure, at any rate."

"Yes—if the will is not broken down. In some way, I fear trouble about the child. The woman may play us false!"

"No—no danger of that! She loves money too well! Money is king, the world over. And

you have enough of it now to have things your own way. When this beast, Stanley, is out of my way, I'll snap my fingers at the world !”

“I wish the brat could be as easily got rid of !” said Minna.

“Well, perhaps it may be,” said her mother. “A child would be an awful bother in a European tour, and an encumbrance which would make many a marrying man think the second time before he made an offer.”

“There's a rough-looking man at the door, ma'am, who says his name is Ned Bracket, and he wants to see Mrs Desha and her daughter,” said the servant.

Mrs Desha turned deadly white, and Minna uttered a faint scream.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“THERE, there, gal ; git out o' the way. You've done your-part o' the business ! I can get along with this crowd myself.”

And the man who announced himself as “Ned Bracket.” at the door of Mrs Martin's house, pushed the servant girl one side, and entered the room where Mrs Martin and her mother were sitting.

“Go down stairs, Bridget,” said Mrs Desha. “When I want you, I'll call you.”

“Yes, ma'am,” said the girl, whose eyes and mouth were wide open at the uncouth familiarity of the rough-looking stranger. And she disappeared.

“I see that you didn't expect me. Don't seem terrible glad to see me, either.”

"What brought you here?" at last she gasped.

"A great variety of means, old woman!" said he. "Some of the way I rode a mule back; some of the way I footed it; then I took a steamer down the Arkansaw and up the Massasip; and then staged it, canaled it, and rail-roaded it till I got here. Now, I've answered your question; I'd thank you to answer mine. Haven't you got anything better to drink in this crib than that wishy-washy stuff? I want something to put life in me. I'm tired and dry, and expect to be hungry pretty soon."

"Minna, go and get him some brandy," said Mrs Desha.

"You thought you and Minna had given me the slip nicely—didn't you?" continued Mr Bracket. "But I got on your trail; heard all about you; how you passed Minna off for a young, unmarried gal, and married her to a rich old covey here. I thought you'd gone about far enough when you'd done that, and as you'd made a nice thing of it, I'd come on and help you to spend a few of the dimes. Mrs Desha sounds better here than Moll Miller did on the Arkansaw Border—doesn't it?"

"What will you take to go back to the Arkansas Border, and swear never to look after us, or trouble us again?" asked Mrs Desha.

"That depends altogether on what you've made on your spec'!" said Mr Bracket coolly.

"We've made nothing sure yet. The old man killed himself a few days ago, and we have got to prove his will and go through a course of law before we can get anything of any account."

"How much could you raise if I'd clear right out?"

"I don't know. Maybe three or four thousand dollars?"

"Three or four thousand fiddlesticks! I reckon the old man has other heirs that would give a fellow a better price to prove that the gal who called herself Minna Desha was Minna Bracket, married to Ned Bracket, of the Border!"

Mrs Desha was evidently in fear of the man, whose rough, repulsive face was half-hidden in his uncombed hair and a long, matted, black beard. But his black eyes burned like two coals of fire.

"If we could, by borrowing, raise ten thousand dollars for you, Ned, would you go away and let us alone?" asked Mrs Desha.

"That sounds a little more like reason; but it isn't more'n enough to start a decent faro-bank with. Say twenty thousand, and I'll talk to you."

"Well, twenty thousand! Will you go then?" cried the woman, in desperation.

"Yes; I'll slide on that."

"Well, you shall have it. It may take us a few days to raise it. Will you keep quiet in some out-of-the-way hotel till I can get it for you?"

"Yes; provided you let me have three or four hundred now, to show that you are in earnest."

Mrs Desha handed a roll of notes for four hundred dollars to Bracket, who looked over the notes carelessly, and then thrust them into

a deep pocket in his coat. "When shall I come for the balance of the pile?"

"In just ten days from this time," said the widow. "And do not show yourself till then."

"Very well; I reckon I can make this pile last till then," said he.

Turning to Minna, he reached out his great, rough hand, and said, in what he intended to be a kindly tone: "I don't feel hard tow'rd you; the old woman, there, has been at the bottom of the whole thing."

And, laughing loudly, he turned and went away.

"Well, mother, what shall we do now?" asked Minna, with a hopeless sigh, after he had gone.

"We have got to buy him off or kill him!" said Mrs Desha, who had recovered her calmness. "Leave all to me. I can manage his case!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"LETTERS this morning, father," said Lizzie, as she laid a bundle from the post office on his table in the library, at the same time when she brought him his "eleven o'clock," as the single glass of toddy, which he took at that hour in the morning, had long since been christened.

"Ay! A couple from abroad. Now we shall hear all about the 'Prometheus,' and the truth; for these are from Edgar," said the old gentleman, glancing at post-marks and super-scriptions.

"What does he say, father?" asked Lizzie,

after her father had opened and glanced over the two foreign letters.

"He tells the same story that the paper did. They made a splendid run until they were within two or three days' sail of port, when a gale came on, which forced them to lay to under trisails. During this, the ship sprung a leak, and they could barely keep her afloat—all hands at the pumps. Luckily, the gale broke; and they bore away for port, and got in with eight feet of water in the hold. They got a couple of tugs alongside, with steam-pumps aboard; and these gained on it, until the leak was discovered.

"The steward having deserted as soon as they reached port, suspicion attached to him, especially as the leaks were found in his store-room. In his trunk they found the augurs which he had used.

"Edgar now put the police on his track; and the rascal was discovered, disguised as an old woman, just as he was getting on board an English packet.

"Edgar turned him over to the consul, who at once sent him home in irons for trial."

"What time will Edgar be home, father?"

"Very soon, child. He had a cargo already engaged. We may look for him every day. He bids me present his regards to you, and to say that your judgment of the true character of the steward was astonishingly true. He means to put the next crew he ships under your eye, so that he can know what rascals he has on board."

"I knew that the steward was a bad man; he could not bear the deliberate glance of my eye, father."

"What's this about rats?" said Mr Gross-beak. "Edgar says, tell Miss Lizzie that the rats have not troubled me, nor have I made any addition to my picture-gallery. What does the boy mean by that, I wonder?"

"Some joke of his; but I do not see the point of it," said Lizzie, turning her head away, so that her father could not see the flood of colour which rose to her cheeks, as she thought of her picture, and the lock of hair which was to be infallible against rats.

"Well, I'm glad the boy is coming. I want him here to contest that infamous will. I believe it is a forgery, as much as ever I believed anything in the world. Levi Martin never could, in his senses, have made out such a will. Their very hurry to push it through what the lawyers call probate, proves that there is something wrong. Had I not taken Mr Graham's advice, and clapped a stopper on their proceedings, they would have had all his property turned into cash, and been off with it by this time."

"Nothing has yet been heard of Edgar's sister—has there, father?"

"No, pet."

"It is strange. Edgar fears that she has made away with herself. I hope to heaven it is not a family mania!"

"No, child, no! I think she'll turn up somewhere, all safe and sound yet."

"I hope so, father. But excuse me. I must go and 'show our new cook the ropes,' as you'd say; for Priscilla left this morning; and to-night she is to be married."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE "Prometheus" was just ready to sail with a full cargo stowed, for New York, when the American consul, who was well known to Edgar, hurried on board, to engage a passage for an invalid lady and two servants—a male and female.

"My papers are already made out, and I do not care about taking passengers ; but if it will be a favour to you, consul, I will take them, if they have their passports, and all right," said Edgar.

"It will be a favour. The lady came over upon a tour of pleasure ; but she met with banditti in Italy, and was robbed of a large sum ; and her health and nerves, instead of being improved, have been injured."

"Well, give me the names, so they may be inserted in my clearing papers."

"Mrs Melinda Peters, her servants, Kate O'Rourke and Eliphalet Sawkins," said the consul.

"Well, sir, have them on board as soon as you can," said Edgar, penciling down their names. "I must go to the Custom House now. I've got a fair wind, and want to be off while it lasts."

"I had nearly forgotten another case. A poor fellow was brought in by a French frigate this morning, who was rescued from some Sumatra pirates but a short time since," said the consul. "His ship was wrecked, and all the officers and crew lost but himself and one companion. They were picked up by a piratical

proa, and have been held as slaves ever since. He was first mate of his ship, and being an American, is entitled to a passage home at my hands, for he is destitute."

"Poor fellow! Send him on board; he shall share the best I have," said Edgar. "I must have his name, too, to put in the papers. These Frenchmen are thundering particular."

"Charles Armstrong is the name," said the consul, looking over his memorandum-book.

"Charles Armstrong? Do you know the name of his ship?" asked Edgar, eagerly.

"Let me see—the 'Marathon,' of New York," said the consul, again looking at his notes.

"Bring him aboard as soon as you can. His passage is free. You needn't tell him who commands here; the surprise will be all the greater," said Edgar.

"Why, do you know him?"

"I think I do. He is one of my dearest friends. My father used to employ him, but took a spite against him, and turned him off. He was in the 'Marathon' when I last heard from him—a couple of years ago or more."

"Well, I will send him and the other passengers on board," said the consul.

After the usual formula and customary delay, Edgar received his clearance-papers and sailing permit, and returned with them to his ship.

"Have the passengers come on board yet?" he asked of his first officer.

"Yes, sir, bag and baggage, and are all below, getting themselves ready for the voyage."

was the response—"all but the consul's man; there he is by the wheel-house."

Edgar stepped aft: and in the thin and haggard skeleton of a man who stood there, could but just recognise that it was the Charley Armstrong whom he had known.

"Why, Charley!" he exclaimed, as he touched his hand, "is this you? You look under the weather."

"Good heavens! is this you, Edgar Martin?" exclaimed Armstrong.

"Yes; I'm captain of this craft; and you shall have a comfortable passage home in her. I'll try and fat you up before you get home, so that people will know you again. After we're at sea, and all snug, I shall have a thousand questions to ask you. But now duty calls. Here, steward!"

"Sir?"

And a different looking specimen of a man from Stanley—an open-faced, honest-looking man—answered the captain's call.

"Take this gentleman below, and make him a nice port-wine sangaree, and set him out a cold lunch; and fit up the state-room next forward of mine for him."

"Yes, sir."

"Now, Charley, go below and lunch up a little bit. Make yourself perfectly at home on board this craft. No one can be more welcome."

"He must know of it, or he would not treat me so very kindly," murmured Armstrong, as he followed the steward below.

All was now bustle on board the "Prome-

theus" Soon the cry of the captain, "Clear away the bow-line!" was heard. And away the good ship shot from her fastenings, and gently moved out amid the vessels which dotted the harbour, as proud in her looks as e'er a lady robed for the ball.

In a little while, the freshening breeze and the roll of the ground swell told those who were below that the ship was once more at sea.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"You're a lucky devil, Stanley!" said one of the keepers of the prison wherein the late steward of the "Prometheus" was confined, entering his cell with a large basket in his hand.

"Maybe I am, but I'll have to borrow somebody else's eyes to see it!" said the ex-steward, gloomily.

"Why, look here!" said the keeper, "see what a present you have got, and then don't say you're not in luck! Here's a half-dozen bottles of wine—some oranges, apples, cakes, and a quarter box of real prime Havana cigars."

"Who brought them?" asked Stanley, arousing from his almost sullen quiet.

"Why, the nicest kind of an old lady—she talked to me a half-hour about you! Says she knew you when you were a boy, and is dreadful sorry to hear that you're in a scrape. The way she takes snuff is death to all creeping things."

"It couldn't have been Mrs Desha," muttered Stanley to himself. "And I don't know

anyone else in the city who would trouble herself about me. Are you sure that these things are for me, keeper?"

"If your name is Stanley, and you're the late steward of the 'Prometheus,' I am," replied the keeper. "The old lady said you needn't be at all sparing of the things, she'd bring some more before long."

"Well, she was kind, whoever she was," said Stanley, commencing to peel an orange.

"And thoughtful, too. She even put a corkscrew in the basket to open your wine with."

"Yes; so I see," said Stanley, taking up the instrument, which was one of the old-fashioned kind, with a brush affixed to the handle. And upon this handle, apparently cut with a knife, was the letter "M."

Stanley noticed this, but made no remark.

Opening a bottle, he said to the keeper

"If you'll get a couple of glasses, we'll see if this wine is good for anything."

The keeper brought the glasses, and the wine was soon tasted.

"Old and mellow as ripe grapes," said the keeper.

"And plenty of body in it—it is prime sherry," said Stanley. "I profess to be a judge of wine. Take an orange?"

The keeper took an orange, and Stanley opened the box of cigars. And he lighted one, while the keeper did likewise.

By the time that the two cigars were smoked out, and the bottle of wine gone, Stanley, who had been quite sullen hitherto, became very friendly and chatty. He now insisted upon

opening a second bottle of wine, since the old lady had promised to come again.

The wine was so prime that the keeper could not object, and the second bottle was soon opened.

"Hasn't this a rather different flavour from the other bottle?" asked the keeper, after they had swallowed a couple of glasses and lighted fresh cigars. "It seems to have a kind of smoky taste to me."

"The cigars, I guess, affect the taste. The wine is all alike," said Stanley, as he raised a third glass to his lips and drank it off.

"Maybe it is; but my head feels cursedly curious!" said the keeper. "It goes around like a whirligig!"

"And I am dizzy, and my stomach feels strangely! Curse me, if I don't believe the wine is poisoned!" said Stanley, turning pale, and shuddering.

"Poisoned?" gasped the keeper, staggering to his feet.

"Yes—poisoned!" groaned Stanley. "I know it is so. My head is whirling like a top."

"Help! help! Call the doctor!" cried the keeper, as he staggered out of the cell, where he could attract the attention of another keeper.

"What's the matter, Sessions?" asked the other keeper.

"I expect that Stanley and I are poisoned—run for Doctor Cobel as quickly as you can," said the keeper, sinking back upon the straw pallet in Stanley's cell.

"O my God! I know who has done this. It is that she-devil Desha!" groaned Stanley.

The keeper was each moment getting worse, and now writhed in convulsions. Stanley struggled in vain to command himself until aid should arrive. He, too, in a few moments, was rolling on the stony floor of his cell, shrieking and yelling in the death agony.

The prison physician came; but it was too late. The keeper was dead—Stanley was dying.

"They have taken prussic acid!" said the physician, the moment he entered the cell. "I smell it plainly."

Stanley pointed to the partly-emptied bottle of wine, and gasped:

"Poisoned! Old woman—destroy my evidence—"

He tried to say more, but death cut him short.

The physician wrote down his words, and then secured the basket and its entire contents, that the mystery of this poisoning might be investigated.

Here was another job for the coroner—and another item for the reporters. Both parties were on hand in a little while; and though no trace of the old woman could be found, a capital and thrilling mess of horror and mystery was dished up by the reporters for the eyes and ears of the public next morning.

The police, too, had a chance to exhibit their detective energies; for it was all-important to know who was the old woman who brought that basket to the prison.

How true it is, that "the foulest wind blows good to somebody."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MRS PETERS kept her state-room closely for the first day on board the "Prometheus;" for with all her other ills, she could not avoid a slight touch of sea-sickness. But on the second morning out, she came out into the cabin, much to the relief of Eliphalet Sawkins, who, having something to talk about, wanted somebody to talk to.

"Miss Peters," said he, with an extra serious look upon his ever-serious countenance, "have you seen our capting, yet?"

"No, Eliphalet. I have not," said Mrs Peters. "Why do you ask that question?"

"Wall, you jest look at him at dinner-time, if he don't come down afore then," said Eliphalet.

"Is he so much more handsome than other men, or is he ugly?" said Mrs Peters with a smile; for she had got used to the oddity of Eliphalet.

"He isn't bad lookin'; but that isn't it," said Eliphalet.

"Well, what is it?" said Mrs Peters.

"You mind Mrs Armstrong that we lost in the mountings, Miss Peters?"

"Indeed, I cannot keep her out of my mind a moment," said the lady.

"Wall, you'll think a heap more on her when you see the capting."

"How so, Eliphalet? Why more then than at any other time?"

"Because he's the very picter of her, Miss Peters. Jest sich eyes and hair, and jest sich

a proud look when he speaks up. If he isn't her brother, he ought to be, for they look enough alike."

"I will notice, when the captain comes into the cabin," said Mrs Peters. "I do not know whether Mrs Armstrong had any relatives who followed the sea or not. She never would speak of her family connections at all."

"I know she wouldn't. She had strange ways. But she was a born lady, after all."

"She was a most estimable woman, and I never shall forget her!" said Mrs Peters, sighing. "Where is Kate, Eliphalet? I have seen her but once since I left my bed."

"Catharine is sacrificin' to old Neptune—offerin' up all she's been eatin' and drinkin' for a week past. I saw her head over the stern-end of the ship just now!"

"Ah, she is sea-sick, poor girl!"

"Yes, ma'am, she is that! She looks as yaller as ripe punkins! Wouldn't you like a leetle sumthin' to steady your narves, Miss Peters. A leetle sling, with the leetlest drop of good brandy in it?"

"Make me a plain lemonade, and bring me a cracker."

"Yes, ma'am. Shall I put ice in it?"

"Yes."

"They've real Boston ice on board," said Eliphalet. "It is strange how Boston ice does go. They had it in Paris, they had it in Havre, they've had it everywhere we've been. These furriners must think ice don't grow nowhere but in Boston! Or else the Boston chaps are so mighty cute that they stock all the markets

and kill the trade for other folks! Shall I make it sweet, Miss Peters?"

"Tolerably sweet, Eliphalet."

"Wouldn't you like a bit of cheese with your cracker?"

"No; I thank you."

Eliphalet now went to work to prepare the lemonade, and let his tongue rest for a minute or two.

CHAPTER XL.

"ONE of them out of the way!" said Mrs Desha, calmly, as she read the morning paper, at breakfast time, on the day succeeding that when Sessions and Stanley perished so miserably in the prison.

"One of whom, mother?" asked Minna, as she took a piece of toast upon her plate.

"Who but one of our enemies! Who else should I wish out of the way!" said Mrs Desha, bitterly.

"Well, who is gone now?"

"Why, Stanley, to be sure. He and a keeper, who was fond of good wine, died very suddenly last night. The coroner and his sapient jury say they were poisoned by some person unknown, who introduced a deadly drug in some wine. Three bottles out of six were found to contain prussic acid."

"You take it very coolly, mother; I wish I had your nerve."

"It is a pity you had not, child. But there is nothing in this to affect me. The poison was administered by some person unknown! The verdict says so!"

"But mother, I know—"

"Hush, child! You know nothing—nothing of this matter. You must not even suffer yourself to think that you do!"

"Well, I will try not to. But it does seem dreadful! If you were found out, all our money would not save you."

"Bah! I am not going to be found out. I am not such a fool as to leave myself open to detection."

"But Mr Hourly will suspect!"

"What if he does! His interest is ours! If he sees what he should see, and does what he ought, and no more, he will make a snug thing out of his connection with us! He is a rascal, like most every lawyer; a smooth one, it is true, but a rascal, nevertheless, and we employ him to play the rascal for us. If all men were honest, do you think lawyers would be needed? And mustn't the dishonest have lawyers as well as the honest? Life is at best but a game of rascality, and he or she who holds most trumps, comes out the winner!"

"That's a gay idea, old woman. I like that!" said a rough, and but too well-known voice.

Both women looked up with a start, and there stood Mr Ned Bracket in the doorway. How long he had been there or what he had heard, was more than they knew, and what one of them, especially, would have been glad to know.

"You here?" cried Mrs Desha. "You promised to keep away until the ten days had expired!"

"Yes—I know. But you ought to know what

promises are made for! They're like bread, to be broken, when necessity requires it. I fell in with some sharper 'legs' here than we have on the Border, and they've cleaned me out. I haven't a red left. So I made up my mind not to stand on ceremony with a mother-in-law, but to come down on you for a small advance on that twenty thousand!" said Mr Bracket, advancing, and taking a seat directly in front of Mrs Desha.

"Have you any left in the pocket-book, Minna?" asked Mrs Desha.

"Yes—three hundred dollars, I believe."

"Bring it here, then. This alligator has got to be satisfied, no matter how we are troubled."

"You look troubled!" said Bracket, with a sneer, after Minna left the room. "You'd better treat me about right, or I'll make you look wilder than you ever did yet! Your neck isn't a bit too short for a rope, my fine lady!"

"I do mean to treat you right, Ned—so help me. Heaven, I do!" said the terror-stricken woman.

"You'd better! That's all!" replied the man, as he cast a huge mouthful of tobacco-juice on the carpet.

"Hadn't you better stay here with us till I get the money for you, Ned?" said Mrs Desha. "There's a nice large room up stairs, and there's plenty of good liquor in the house, and you can have whatever you want to eat."

"Yes!" And the man laughed mockingly. "And you'd fix it up nice for me, wouldn't you? Oh yes! I wouldn't be much trouble after a day or two! No, no! I see your game, Moll

Miller, just as plain as if I knew every card in your hand. You can't fool me !”

Mrs Desha turned white with rage, but she feared the man too much to risk the reply she wanted to make. And she felt a relief when Minna came back with the money.

“There !” said the woman, handing him the money. “Now, don't show your face here again till the ten days are up, and then come for the money and be ready to leave.”

“You get the money ready, and don't mind me,” said Bracket, who at once rose and left the women alone.

CHAPTER XLI.

“HORROR upon horror ! I wonder what will come next !” exclaimed Mr Grossbeak, as his eye fell upon the paragraph in the paper which contained the notice of the prison poisoning affair.

“What is it now, father ?” asked Lizzie

“Read it—read it aloud, child, for I have only looked at the head of the article,” said Mr Grossbeak. and he handed Lizzie the newspaper.

“Do you mean this, ‘Poison in Prison ?’” asked the daughter.

“Yes, pet.”

Lizzie, then, in her low, clear voice, read the account as reported :

“**POISON IN PRISON.**—We have another mysterious tragedy to record. Yesterday evening, a short time before dark, an elderly woman, very respectable in dress and appearance, made

application at the gates of the City Prison to send a basket of fruit, cake, and a little wine and some cigars into the prisoner Stanley, charged with an attempt to destroy the ship 'Prometheus' at sea, of which vessel he was the steward.

"One of the keepers, Mr Zaccheus Sessions, supposing all to be right, the woman was allowed to depart, while he took the basket in to the prisoner. What followed, we cannot know precisely; but it appears that the keeper and the prisoner opened and drank one bottle of the wine, which does not appear to have contained poison. They had commenced on a second bottle, about one-third of which had been drunk when they discovered that they were poisoned. Mr Sessions instantly gave the alarm, and the prison physician was sent for. Sessions was almost immediately seized with convulsions, and expired before the doctor reached his side. Stanley lingered a few minutes longer, and was able to utter a few words after the physician got to him, by which it is inferred that he thought he was poisoned to prevent his giving evidence in some matter. But he expired before his full meaning could be elicited.

"The physician detected the kind of poison used, by its smell, as soon as he approached the victims. It was prussic acid. Upon examination, three out of six of the bottles of wine were found to have been poisoned."

"Strange! It seems as if a fatality followed everything connected with the Martin matter," said Mr Grossbeak, when Lizzie finished re

"I cannot see who should have been so implicated in any evidence which he could give as to find it necessary to resort to such a dreadful means of silencing him!" said Lizzie.

"Nor I," said her father. "Lizzie, get me a sheet of paper and some sealing wax."

"Yes, father—are you going to write a letter?"

"No, child—only going to enclose a fifty-dollar note to the family of that poor keeper. They need kindness now, if ever it is needed, though money is but a poor consolation for such a loss as theirs."

"Dear father, you've a good heart. Here are ten dollars from my spending-money—put that with it."

"I will, child; and you shall not miss it, either."

Lizzie got the paper, sealing-wax, etc. (for envelopes were not in fashion then as now), and the deed of quiet charity was performed—the letter with its enclosure got ready for the post—not a word written in it to indicate who the giver was. That is true benevolence. Not the pharisaical sort you see paraded in the newspapers, with the giver's name and subscription announced, "Irish Directory" fashion, where the funds subscribed for the starving poor yet remains in the pockets of the Chiefs of the Directory.

"Have you seen the little ones this morning, pet?"

"Oh yes, father. I always give them my first kiss in the morning. They're as bright as roses! They grow wonderfully. They could

not do better. I only wish I could have had the naming of them. Biddy Megann thinks as much of them, she says, as she used to do of me when I was a baby, and that must have been a great deal, to take her word for it."

"She is a fussy but a kind-hearted old creature," said Mr Grossbeak. "I don't think I shall ever get over the idea of John going down on his knees to her."

And Mr Grossbeak's sides shook with laughter.

CHAPTER XLII.

NED BRACKET had not been long gone when Mrs Desha and her daughter had another visitor. It was Mr Hourly, their lawyer.

He was pale and very nervous. He evidently had seen the news in the morning paper.

"Good morning, Mr Hourly; take a seat. Any news stirring to-day?" said Mrs Desha, with her usual composure, as the lawyer entered.

"Stanley is dead!" said he, abruptly.

"So I see in the paper," she replied with the most perfect composure.

"And you can sit there and tell me, madam, that you do not know who caused his death?"

"Mr Hourly, I believe that I am not on trial before you for anything."

"If I were to go before a magistrate and state what I know, you soon would be on trial, Mrs Desha."

"What do you know, sir?"

"That you asked me, upon the occasion of

my late visit, whether Stanley would be permitted by the prison authorities to receive a present of wine, fruit, cigars, &c."

"Yes; a very extraordinary question—was it not?"

"Legally, when coupled with the fact that he has received wine, fruit, and cigars, and his death with them, the question would have a great deal of importance, madam."

"Well, it does not affect me. I defy you, or any other living being, to prove that I have been out of this house since you were here, or that I have sent to Mr Stanley or anybody else any fruit or wine. You may surmise what you please, but in law I believe that proof is necessary."

"Circumstantial evidence has hung many a person," said the lawyer. "But, madam, I do not wish to involve you in trouble. You have your own conscience to deal with. But I must inform you that I cannot conscientiously act as counsel for one who seems to hold human life at so light a value."

"You are Mrs Martin's counsel, Mr Hourly. This is rather hard language to use in regard to her!"

"You know I do not mean her; I mean you, madam. You employed me to act for Stanley."

"Well, sir, you will not be troubled any more on his account. You seem to be very conscientious in regard to human life just now, Mr Hourly; but if I remember correctly, you not only approved of but applauded the plot to have the 'Prometheus' sunk. It was the very

thing to secure the safety of Mr Martin's slander cases, you said."

The wily lawyer was caught in his own trap. He could not deny the fact which she stated.

"But that was not poisoning two human beings in cold blood," he stammered in confusion.

"No; only sinking a ship and drowning her whole crew in cold water," said the lady, with a sneer.

Mr Hourly looked perplexed, but made no reply. Mrs Desha now changed the subject of conversation.

"Mrs Martin wishes to raise a large sum of money—twenty thousand dollars in cash—upon her property," said she. "Can you tell us how it can be done, Mr Hourly?"

"Twenty thousand dollars!" cried he, in surprise. "How can she possibly want so large a sum?"

"That is neither here nor there. She wants it. Can you get it for her?"

"I might possibly; but as the will is to be contested, it will be hard to raise."

"A third of the property is hers, whether the will is allowed or not."

"True; I will try and raise the money. When is it wanted?"

"Within four or five days. We will give you a handsome per-centage."

"Very well, madam. I will do my best."

And the lawyer left, satisfied that Mrs Desha possessed more assurance than any other person that he had met with.

CHAPTER XLIII.

At the dinner-table of the "Prometheus," on the second day out from Havre, homeward bound, Captain Edgar Martin presided ; and as he courteously helped her to such articles of food as she desired, Mrs Peters had an opportunity to do as she had promised Eliphalet—that is, to examine the captain's features for the resemblance to which Eliphalet had alluded.

And, to her surprise, she found that the latter had not at all exaggerated the resemblance which the captain bore to Mrs Armstrong.

Totally a stranger to the captain, she felt a delicacy in asking him any questions about his family, yet she felt that the likeness existing between the two persons could not be other than a family resemblance.

The only other person at the table was the "consul's passenger," Charley Armstrong.

The captain, after helping the lady, entered into a pleasant general conversation, alluding to the beauty of the day, and the prospect of a quick and pleasant passage home.

The lady said that she hoped, indeed, for good fortune now, for it seemed as if her evil stars had predominated in her travels so far.

"The consul at Havre told me that you had been unfortunate in meeting with brigands in Italy," said the captain.

"Did he state the extent of my misfortune?" asked Mrs Peters.

"He merely said that you had been robbed of a large amount of property," replied Edgar.

"The loss of money and jewels was the least

of my misfortunes," said the lady. "I had with me a young widow lady as a companion—one of the dearest and most amiable of friends."

Tears started in the lady's eyes, and she paused.

"Was she killed?" asked Edgar.

"No, sir; but the chief of the banditti, who in the disguise and under the name of an Italian count had met us in society in Paris, and had there become infatuated with her beauty, and vainly offered himself in marriage, took her from me, and would not listen to my offer of ransom."

"It is, indeed, a sad case!" said Edgar.

"A most singular thing recalls her to me now," continued Mrs Peters. "It first attracted the observation of my male servant, and now it attracts all my attention. It is the great resemblance which the lady bore to yourself."

"To me," said Edgar, hastily. "What was her name, madam? I have a sister—God only knows where."

"Mrs Armstrong," said the lady.

"Good heavens! what is the matter, Charley?" cried Edgar, as Armstrong, with a groan, sunk back from the table in a death-like swoon.

In a few minutes he was partially recovered.

"Where is she? Where is she?" he asked, wildly.

"Who?—Mrs Peters? She is here."

"No, no, Ellen—my wife. It must be her—it must be her," moaned the poor man. "She may think I am dead; I have been gone two years."

"What Ellen?"

"Your sister, Edgar! She is my wife. Her father and his new wife treated her so badly, that we were privately married in the Church of the Ascension in New York. It is there recorded. I provided for her as well as I could, but had to go to sea, for it was our only means of living. I have not heard from her since."

The young captain hurried to his state-room, and brought out the miniature which we have alluded to—that of his sister, not Lizzie's.

"Does this look like the Mrs Armstrong who was your companion?" he asked of Mrs Peters.

"Yes, sir, it is her very self. And now that I look at this gentleman, ill as he is, I can see that he resembles a miniature which she wore in a breast-pin."

"I had such a one painted for her," said Armstrong. "Edgar—I must go back. I cannot go home without her."

Edgar sighed and shook his head. Had he only his own wishes and interest to consult, he would have changed the course of his ship in five minutes, and ran back to the port which she had so lately left. But she was freighted with a cargo belonging to others, and their rights and interests could not be sacrificed.

Smothering a sigh, he said:

"Be calm, Charley! I have no doubt but that it is Ellen, but I cannot now turn the ship back. I will carry every rag of sail I can, and make a quick passage to New York; and then,

when I have given up the ship, we will both return and rescue her if she is living, or revenge her if she has met with a worse fate. Be calm and regain your strength, for you will need it."

"If Miss Peters will only give me clear when she gets hum, I'd like to jine you in that expedition, capting," said Eliphalet Sawkins, who had stood near Mrs Peters' chair during the occurrence of the conversation. "I could be of some use as a pilot, for I remember jest where the tarnal thieves did their work. I thought a powerful sight of Mrs Armstrong, and I'll go and fight a ridgment of wild-cat Italians for her if you'll give me the chance."

"You shall have it if Mrs Peters can spare you when she gets home," said Edgar.

"I will spare him, of course, and I can testify to his bravery and faithfulness under all circumstances," said Mrs Peters.

Mrs Peters now related exactly the manner of Mrs Armstrong's capture to Edgar and her husband, and said that, from the manner of Ghibetti, she felt a hope that he would use persuasion rather than force, and that Mrs Armstrong, hoping to escape, would temporize with him, and eventually get away.

Edgar now felt one satisfaction. His sister had not, as he feared, committed suicide. And he hoped and prayed that he might yet be able to rescue her safely from her perilous position. His firmness encouraged Armstrong, whose ill health had terribly weakened his nerves; and he, too, began to hope.

CHAPTER XLIV.

DAYS, weeks passed, and Mrs Armstrong was still a captive. But never was captive more gently treated. During all this time she had seen Ghibetti but once. He looked pale and careworn, and though he evidently saw her, passed quickly from sight without looking back.

"Were he not a robber!" sighed she. "Were he not a robber!"

"It is your fault, dear lady, if he remains one," said Guilia, who, standing near her, had heard the words which she had uttered almost unconsciously. "You can lead him from this wild life. With you he would go to your own free and beautiful land, of which you have told me so much that I long to see it."

"You over-estimate my power, Guilia!" said the lady, sadly.

"No—I do not. He pines for your society as the drooping flower pines for the dews of heaven! Yet he has promised, and he restrains himself even from seeing you. His only hope is to win your love, so that you may be his wife. We already love you as sisters—you are as kind and gentle as you are beautiful."

"You flatter me, Guilia. And you speak of what can never—never be! My heart lies buried in the dark, deep sea, with my dead husband. I loved him—I can never love another! 'It would be worse than mockery, Guilia, for me to give your brother my hand when I could not yield my heart.'"

Guilia sighed, but made no reply. The lady said, again:

"I would not wound your feelings, my good girl, but the life your brother leads must force him sometimes to shed innocent blood."

"Was there any blood shed, lady, when you were captured? No—he never has nor will shed blood except in self-defence. When the carbineers attack him, then he beats them back, and blood flows! Then he is a lion at bay, and woe to those that hear his voice or feel his claws!"

Lucia now came in loaded with flowers, with which to twine a wreath for Mrs Armstrong.

CHAPTER XLV.

MR GRAHAM, the distinguished lawyer employed by Mr Grossbeak in his slander suit, and also to contest the alleged will which Mrs Martin had entered for probate, called to consult with his client about the matter, for the widow, through her able counsel, Mr Hourly, was pushing for a speedy settlement of the matter.

"I am glad you've come, Mr Graham," said the old gentleman when the lawyer, who had been announced by a servant, entered the library. "I received a singular note about the Martin case this morning! If it tells the truth, the widow is a devil and no mistake, and we've got her on the hip."

"What is it?"

"Read the note for yourself! It came by post," said Mr Grossbeak.

The lawyer opened, and read its contents aloud. They were:

"Mr Martin Grossbeak,—I hereby inform

you that the late Levi Martin was imposed upon by his wife, now widow, and made to believe that she had been delivered of an infant son, supposed by him to be his child. The child in question is the lawful child of Barney and Mary O'Rourke. The O'Rourkes were hired to let Mrs Martin have the child as her own by the payment of a sum of money every year."

"What do you think of it," asked Mr Grossbeak.

"I like it," said the lawyer. "We have a case now."

"If, then, this is true, the will cannot stand."

"No—for it was written under the belief that the infant in question was his own. That act of deceit on the part of the woman will destroy her chance to anything but the allowance which the law gives her of his property."

"Even that is more than she should have. She married him, evidently, only for his property, and that she was determined to have at all hazards."

"I must manage to see the child and these O'Rourkes in some way," said the lawyer. "I hate that way of doing things, but I think I'll have to disguise myself, and pay Mrs Martin a visit under pretence of wishing to buy the old house."

CHAPTER XLVI.

"WELL, we have the money for Bracket now, and I shall be glad when he gets it, for he will not stay here with so much on hand. He'll be

off to his old haunts, and go into a round of dissipation, which will probably use him up," said Mrs Desha to her daughter, a week or so after the visit of Mr Hourly.

"When you speak of the devil, he is apt to be near at hand!" said a gruff voice, and as Mrs Desha turned, she saw the very man she had spoken of, standing on the threshold of the room.

"You have a very unpleasant way of creeping in on people when they do not expect you," said Mrs Desha with a frown. "But I am glad you are here. We have got that money ready for you, and the sooner you take it and are off the better."

"So that I can pitch into dissipation, and use myself up, eh? That I believe is what you were calculating upon when I came to the door. But don't feel uneasy on that line, old lady! I'll outlive you, for you'll die of one of your own doses, or else with an overplus of hemp, just as sure as my name is Ned Bracket! Well, count out them dimes, and I'm off like a Cherokee pony on a quarter-race."

"Minna, get the money!" said Mrs Desha. "We've got it in large bills—one-thousand-dollar bills, on city banks. You can get gold for them if you want."

"Yes—I'll manage that, old lady. You could have raised as much more if I had asked it, I suppose?"

"No, we have had to borrow this, and pay a heavy per-centage to get it. I told you that Minna had nothing certain yet."

"Yes! And 'twould be more uncertain if I staid around."

"Here is the money!" said Minna, handing her mother a roll of bills.

The latter passed them over to Bracket. He counted them—twenty in all.

And he rose to go. He paused, and as he looked at Minna, who had remained pale and silent, carefully avoiding to meet the glance of his eye, his face seemed flushed a little, and his lip trembled, as if there was more feeling in his heart than he wished to show.

"Good-bye, Minna—good-bye, gal!" said he. "You'd have been a good girl, and a happy one, if it hadn't been for that old owl!"

Bracket said no more, but turned and left as abruptly as he came.

Bracket turned up Pearl street toward Chatham, intending to go to his boarding-house, to prepare for a start West with the early morning train. He had gone but three or four squares, when a tall, red-faced man, with sandy whiskers, and bushy red hair, whose frame was even more gigantic in proportions than his own, met him coming from the other direction.

"Hallo! Isn't that 'Ned Bracket,' from the Arkansas Border?" asked the stranger.

"I answer to that name, when I know who calls it," said Bracket, stopping, and eyeing the other man closely.

"I knew it was you! My name is Bob Blenners, of Saint Louis!"

"I have heard of you!" said Bracket, rather coolly. "The last I heard of you was that you were a servin' the State up at Jefferson city, for shootin' a chap in the Planter's House."

"Yes: I was there!" said Blenners. "But the governor let me off. I had too many political friends to let me stay there. I'm glad I've met you! Let's go somewhere and wet up."

"I'm not dry!" said Bracket.

"Well, a smoke, then!" said Mr Blenners.

"I don't smoke just now!" said Bracket, moving on.

"Going up street, eh? Well, I reckon I'll go that way," said Blenners, turning around.

"If you're going up street, I'm going down," said Bracket, sternly. "Our roads don't lay together! I know you, Bob Blenners, and I don't fear you, nor I don't like you. You've been great on shootin' and cuttin' men up that hadn't the tools to meet you with, but I never heard of your havin' a fair stand-up fight yet! Now you travel your way and I'll travel mine. If you don't like it—I carry tools, and you can get any sort of satisfaction you want, just for the asking."

Bob Blenners said nothing. He was too mad to speak.

Bracket slowly and defiantly passed on. For a minute, Blenners stood and speechlessly watched him, his face distorted with rage. Then he gave a sharp, low whistle.

A small negro boy, black as charcoal, came across the street, from the shadow in which he had been standing.

"Jupe, did you see that man that I spoke to?" asked Blenners.

"Yes, Massa Bob—I seen him. Dere he goes up de street."

"Well, follow him; see where he goes to,

and what he does; then come and tell me. Don't let him see you. He has insulted me, and his lease of life is short—d—d short! The man that crosses Bob Blenners' path had better make his will before he does it!"

The negro boy did not wait to hear anything but his orders.

Blenners also turned, and went for a little way, until he came to a drinking-house, well-known to the police as a resort for thieves and burglars, characters of the worst kind, and, of course, avoided by the same police as far as possible.

Into this den Mr Blenners went, and, taking a seat at the table, called for a "Tom and Jerry" hot, while he waited the return of his spy.

CHAPTER XLVII.

"THE 'Prometheus' is signalled at Sandy Hook, father," said Lizzie Grossbeak, on the very same afternoon that Mr Ned Bracket made his last visit to Mrs Desha.

"Ay? And how is the wind, child?"

"A little west of north father, and very light," said Lizzie, with a sigh.

"Then, she'll hardly get up to the city to-night," said the old gentleman. "We can look for Edgar pretty early in the morning. I dread to tell him the news."

"He will most likely hear it before he gets here, poor fellow!" said Lizzie, with another sigh. "It will make him feel terribly. If his father had only died from a natural cause, it would not have been so hard to bear."

"Mr Graham wishes to see you, sir," said a servant.

"Very well ; show him up here at once."

The lawyer entered, a moment after, and, bowing to both father and daughter, took a seat.

"Well, what news, Mr Graham ? Have you made the visit you intended ?" asked Mr Grossbeak.

"Yes, sir," said the lawyer. "The information contained in the letter which you received is undoubtedly true. I did not question the woman O'Rourke who acts as nurse to the pretended child of Mr Martin, but the looks of the child are enough. It is the very counterpart of herself in miniature."

"Well, *that's* good. Now, I have some for you. The '*Prometheus*' is below."

"Ah ! then we will not have to stave off the will-case any longer. They will find us ready, now."

"I hope so. It would be a pity for two such women as Mrs Martin and her mother to succeed in robbing the rightful heirs of such a handsome property."

A servant entered at this moment, and announced the name of Edgar Martin.

"Bring him up, just as soon as you can ; and bring some of my best wine, and be in a hurry about it !" cried the delighted old gentleman.

The servant hastened to obey orders, just as Edgar, with a flushed and joyous face, entered the room.

"Welcome back, my boy !" cried Mr Grossbeak—"welcome back ! We heard the ship was

below, but we didn't expect you up to-night, with a head wind, and so little of it."

"The ship is not up yet. I left her at the Narrows, and came up in a row-boat," said Edgar. "I felt anxious to report to you as soon as possible; for I have got to return to Europe by the first packet."

"To Europe? Why, what is up, my lad?"

"My sister, sir. I have heard from her at last."

"Thank God for that!" ejaculated the old merchant.

"She is, however, in a position of great peril, in the hands of Italian brigands, and I must hasten to her rescue before it is too late."

"Why, how did you find out all this, Edgar?"

"From a lady-passenger on board the ship, with whom she was travelling when she was made captive. I learned of it when I had only been a couple of days at sea; and, had the ship and cargo been mine, I should have run back to Havre, and let her lie there until I had found my sister."

"Why didn't you, at any rate? I wouldn't have blamed you."

"I know it, sir; but she has a valuable cargo on freight for others, and the ship would have been liable for damages, had I delayed its delivery. As it is, she has a sixteen thousand clear freight-bill to collect, and isn't leaky, either."

"Leaky? That puts me in mind of your ex-steward, Stanley. He has gone on another voyage."

"What, sir—has he been discharged?"

"No: but Old Nick has taken him in tow. He took a drop too much in prison, or had a drop too much put in what he took. He was poisoned there."

"By whom, sir?"

"That is more than the coroner and his jury could tell, and it yet remains a mystery."

"Well, it saves the poor devil from a trial, and me from being a witness against him."

"Death has been busy since you went away, Edgar."

"Ah? Any of my acquaintances gone?"

The lawyer, without the usual circumlocution of his profession, said:

"Yes, Captain Martin; and we hope you can bear up under calamity as well as you can endure the lesser adversities of life."

"What! my father?" asked Edgar, at once grasping the idea of the only death which he could regard as a calamity personally to himself in that city, beside that of those who stood in health before him. "Has he, too, been poisoned?"

"No, sir—no; he took his own life."

"Gracious God!" gasped the son, sinking back in his chair, in horror; "a suicide?"

"Alas! sir, it is so. A temporary madness drove him to the rash act. As far as we can learn, his young wife and her mother had been encouraging him to the free use of stimulants lately, and his mind was unhinged."

"Curse them! could they not wait for his property without driving him to self-murder?"

"They were evidently scheming for his

property, for they had induced him to make a will some days previous to his death, utterly disinheriting you and your sister."

"For myself, I care nothing for his property, for I can work my way alone through the world. But they must not revel in it."

"They will not to the extent that they expected. By direction of Mr Grossbeak, I have already entered a suit contesting the will in your name; and now that you have arrived, we will put it through."

"You forget, sir, that I must return immediately to Europe for my sister," said Edgar. "The dead is beyond my aid; my only living relative claims my duty."

"True, most true. I have good ground now for putting off the will-case until your sister's return. She must be a party to it," said the lawyer.

"Edgar, take a glass of wine—it will do you good," said Mr Grossbeak, pointing to the table whereupon the servant had placed decanters and glasses.

"No, I thank you, sir. You will please excuse me. I must go down-town now, for I expect the ship will be up, and wish to join her in the stream, so as to get her in dock as soon as I can; for I want to leave all snug before I go away."

"Never mind the ship, my boy; let your mates take care of her."

"I promised them that I would be on board by the time the anchor was down, and it is late now."

"So it is—almost midnight! How the time

has slipped by!" said the lawyer, looking at his watch.

"My boatman is waiting for me, and I must go," said Edgar. "As soon as I can get the ship into her place, I will come up again, and talk over matters with you and Mr Graham."

"Yes, sir, it will be necessary for me to have your affidavit, to get the case put off until you can return with your sister," said the lawyer.

"Very well, sir; all the time that I have to spare from duty on shipboard, before I sail for Europe, is at the service of Mr Grossbeak and yourself."

"I will not take much of it," said the lawyer. "But we must circumvent the plans of those vile women."

"I hope we can, sir," said Edgar, as he rose and took his leave.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

EDGAR hastened from the Grossbeak mansion toward the landing near the Battery, where he had left the boat and boatman who rowed him up from his vessel.

Stepping down the ladder to the floating platform, to which the boat was moored, he was about to arouse the boatman, when a carriage, driven at a rapid rate, dashed down the wharf, and stopped but a few feet beyond the place where he stood. Concealed in the shadow of the pier, he heard the door of the carriage opened, and a rough voice say:

"Hurry, and out with him! The tide is running out like a mill-race, and if he ever

comes up again, he'll be at Sandy Hook before he does."

"Yes, sir," said another voice, evidently Celtic. "Be jabbers, but he's weighty."

"So is your pay for the job, my lad," said the other.

Edgar cautiously crept up the steps, and saw with horror that the two men had lifted what appeared to be a human body from the carriage, and were carrying it to the end of the wharf, evidently intending to cast it into the stream. Without a doubt, a murder had been done, and thus the murderers intended to conceal their crime.

Edgar turned to awaken his boatman; for, with his aid, he meant to attempt to arrest these men, and at least know what they were doing. But his foot slipped on the ladder, and he fell heavily—fortunately, however, for him, in the boat, and on the body of the boatman, who, so suddenly and roughly awakened, shouted "thieves!" and "murder!" in his terror.

The boatman had just begun to comprehend who it was, and how he had been awakened, when Edgar saw a dark mass close by the side of the boat, which had been swept in by the eddy of the tide, as it whirled into the dock. He reached out his hand, and shuddered, as he grasped the hair of a man's head.

It was hard work, for the terrified boatman would lend but little aid; but in a moment Edgar had dragged the body into the boat. A low groan told him that the man was yet alive.

"Pull for the ship as fast as you can," cried Edgar, to the boatman. "The man is not

dead, but God only knows how soon he may be, without help."

The boatman did as he was directed, and the boat was soon alongside the "Prometheus."

CHAPTER XLIX.

"Now our road is clear," said Mrs Desha, on the morning after Bracket, who was evidently a terror to her, had been paid his bribe, and had departed. "Stanley is silenced for ever. Bracket will not trouble us again; in truth, after we realize our money, and turn all the old man's property into cash, we will give him no chance to, for we will leave for Europe, where, with a change of name, we can live like queens, and know what luxury and splendour is. We can dress as richly as we like—ride in such carriages as the nobles use—live in palaces. With so much wealth at our command, we can make amends for all our past sufferings, and live as if life would last for ever."

"What shall we do with the child, mother?" asked Minna. "I am not going to be bothered with him. Even if he was my own, I would hate to have such an encumbrance at my age."

"He can be taken sick and die," said the heartless widow, with a quiet smile. "That must be managed adroitly, so that you will secure all the property, and especially so as not to arouse the suspicions of the O'Rourkes, for if they were to suspect that the child was purposely got rid of, it would take more than money to quiet them. I don't see why common people should love their children—poor people

especially. Love should be a luxury; and poor folks have no business with luxuries."

Minna smiled, and said:

"It is time, then, that I had somebody to love and to love me. I am rich enough to enjoy luxuries; and I have been twice wedded for convenience."

"If you ever marry again, Minna, it must be a duke or a prince who gets your hand. If titles could only be bought abroad by women, I'd be a duchess, marriage or no marriage."

"It will not do to get rid of the child before the will is received in probate—will it, mother?"

"No, of course not. Then, when you assume control over the whole property, the matter can be easily arranged. A few extra drops of laudanum in the child's paregoric will set it into the sleep that knows no awakening."

"The morning paper, ma'am," said Bridget, the girl of all work, bustling, slip-shod, into the room.

The eldest lady took it, and glanced at once at the shipping news.

"The 'Prometheus' is reported at last," she said. "She will be up to-day; and now I suppose the will-case will be allowed to come on, for there will be no further cause for delay after Master Edgar arrives."

"I wish it was over," said Minna; "for Mr Hourly does not seem to act so zealously for us as he did at first," said Minna.

"Oh, he will come around right by-and-by. He was a little shocked by that Stanley matter.

He has a conscience—a thing a lawyer has no business with.”

CHAPTER L.

ALTHOUGH it had been a very busy day with Edgar Martin, the hour that evening was early when he presented himself at the Grossbeak mansion.

Mr Grossbeak was out ; but Lizzie was there, as fresh-looking as a moss-rose just peeping at the sunrise through a veil of dew-drops.

She was sure papa would be in soon, and would be very glad to see Captain Martin, for he had talked about him all day. So at least said Lizzie.

“By the way, I brought you a little present home from France,” said Edgar, “which I hope you will honour me by accepting.”

“Is it death to rats?” she asked, with a laugh.

“You must judge after trial,” said he, producing a small box, which opened with a golden key.

A cry of pleasure escaped from Lizzie’s lips when she saw the gift. It was a small Geneva-made watch, the circle of figures on its face surrounded by a wreath of jewels, so arranged that the word “regard” was initialized.

“It is beautiful! Too rich, too costly, too elegant for such a wild young thing as I!” said Lizzie, as she lifted it by the wonderfully beautiful golden chain attached to it.

Edgar smiled, and opened the back, so as to

show her how to wind it with a little crank inserted there, to save the use of a key.

"There is yet a secret about it!" said he. And he pressed a small spring in the back which had opened, and it flew open, showing a beautifully-executed miniature of the donor—Mr Edgar Martin.

"I know not how to thank you, Captain Martin," she said, in a low tone. "It is so like you. I shall talk to it by the hour when you are away," said Lizzie, gazing upon the picture.

"And then you will find it very unlike me," said Edgar, with a laugh, "for it will have nothing to say in return."

"Oh, yes—for its eyes speak," said Lizzie.

"I hope not; if they do, they may betray a secret!" replied Edgar.

"A secret?"

"Yes; they may tell—"

"Well, sir, what may they tell? You are really provoking! Do you know that a woman is in agony with a secret near her?"

"Then out it comes. Lizzie, I love you!"

"Mercy! is that all? Why, I knew that before, Edgar. Do you think I would have loved you enough to give you my picture, if your eyes hadn't told me before that you cared rather more for me than you did for other mortals in pet—well, I came so near saying it, it must come out—in petticoats!"

The step of Mr Grossbeak was heard in the hall at this instant, and in another moment he entered. ●

"Ah, Edgar, glad to see you, my boy—glad

to see you! What news, my lad—what news?" he cried, as he grasped Edgar's hand with a strength which spoke well for the vigour of his years.

"I have got the ship into dock, cargo entered, and all ready to commence discharging to-morrow, sir!"

"Indeed! You hurry up things, my boy. Some shippers would make a week's work of it!"

"I met with rather a singular adventure last night, sir, after leaving here."

"Ah! what was it, my boy?"

And Edgar told what he had seen at the harbour.

"You do not know who he is?"

"No; he cannot speak yet."

"Well, it is a blessed thing to save life. You are in luck, my boy. What are you playing with there, Lizzie, my pet?"

"A beautiful watch, which Captain Martin brought home to me, father, as a present!" said Lizzie, who, having closed the secret case, handed it to the old gentleman for his inspection.

"Well, it is a beauty!" said the old merchant, after a moment's pause. "Edgar, you'll spoil the girl!"

"I did not forget you, sir," said the young captain. "But the purchase I made for you—a cask of fine old sherry—was rather too heavy for me to bring. It will be up in the course of the day."

"Thank you, my boy—thank you! You are very kind!"

"Will you let the 'Prometheus' lie in port till I come back, sir?"

"Yes, to be sure! And you had better keep your mates on pay. They can live on board as cheap as they can board on shore, and take care of the ship at the same time."

"Yes, sir, so they can; and as the sick man whom I saved cannot be removed, I will leave the steward and cabin boy to look out for him. Doctor Mott has him under charge, and no better surgeon lives."

CHAPTER LI.

THE evening previous to the day when the packet was to sail for Europe, in which Edgar Martin had engaged passage for himself, brother-in-law, and Eliphalet Sawkins, was spent by the young captain up at the Grossbeak mansion. During the early part of the morning, Mr Graham was with Mr Grossbeak and Edgar, making the final business arrangements in connection with the will cases; but he left early, having cautioned Edgar not to be gone over two months, as that was the utmost limit which had been allowed by the court for a delay in hearing the cases, and he dared not trust them without his presence, and, if possible, that of his sister.

While business-matters were in discussion, Lizzie was absent; but when the attorney took his departure, she replaced him in the sitting-room, much to the pleasure of Edgar, who wished to enjoy as much of her company as

possible before he left on a mission, which he well might deem perilous.

Mr Grossbeak rose when she came in, and said:

"Edgar, I have an engagement out for an hour or two, with a whist club of old fogies like myself—you must excuse me, and let Lizzie entertain you a while."

"Certainly, sir. I must be on board ship early, for I have my final arrangements to make; for I leave early in the morning."

"Well, you may be gone before I return. Take this pocket-book, and use its contents."

"But, Mr Grossbeak, I have—"

"But be no buts, Edgar. I will have my own way. Now take it—no thanks—not a word. Good-bye, if I don't see you again to-night, and good luck go with you."

Edgar could only grasp the kind old merchant's hand, and say farewell when he was gone.

"Your father almost oppresses me with kindness," said he to Lizzie.

"It is a way father has with those whom he likes" said she, with a smile. "How long do you think you will be absent?"

"I cannot say. Only that I will return the moment that I have secured the freedom of my sister, if she is yet alive. If she lives, I will not return without her."

"Do be careful of your person in venturing into the haunts of the brigands."

"For your sake, dear Lizzie, I will. I and my party will be well armed; but I shall trust more to diplomacy and cash for success."

"What a joy it will be to see your dear sister once more, especially if she be unharmed and in health."

"Almost too much to anticipate—like that which I look forward to, if I return safely, when I can ask for and receive you as my own—mine wedded in heart, soul, and truth, for ever."

And Edgar drew closer to the petite form, which had nestled by his side on the sofa; and unrebuked, pressed a warm kiss upon her dewy lips.

CHAPTER LII.

"Two months more delay! It is utterly unbearable, Mr Hourly—utterly unbearable!" cried Mrs Desha, when the lawyer informed her of the postponement of the hearing in the will-case which Mr Graham had procured.

"It cannot be helped, madam," said the lawyer. "The opposing counsel has produced affidavits which we could not offset, and the law must have its delays."

"I wish there was no law. I don't see why Mrs Martin cannot convert all the property into cash and leave," said the widow.

"It would be a dangerous and useless experiment," said Mr Hourly. "You must be patient. Time wil' give Mrs Martin her rights."

"What difference can the presence of young Martin and his sister make in the decision about the will? Is it not regularly made, and witnessed, and signed?"

"Yes. But they will undoubtedly claim that Mr Martin was insane when he made it."

"You know he was not."

"Of course, I do; and shall bring fifty or more witnesses, who did business with him on that very day and afterward to prove that he was sane when he made the will. The manner of his death is the only thing against us. That will be urged, and strongly; but I hope to get over it. Now, madam, I have only to say that you and your daughter must be patient."

"Suppose my child were to die—would that make any difference in the will matter?" asked the youngest widow.

"There is no danger of it—is there?" asked the lawyer, looking keenly at her.

"Children are so apt to be ill, especially when they are cutting teeth," said Mrs Desha.

"I hope that Mrs Martin's child will not be taken ill," said Mr Hourly. "I would like to see it in Mrs Martin's arms when she appears in court to claim her rights. It would double the strength of my plea."

"The little dear is not sickly," said Mrs. Martin. "I only asked, because little children are so sickly in the city."

Mr Hourly made no reply; but if his looks interpreted his thoughts, he had his suspicions that both women were trying to deceive him; and after a few commonplace observations, he arose and took his leave.

"That Mrs Desha is a born devil!" he muttered, as he passed out of the front gate, not noticing a commonly-dressed man who stood so near the gate-post that he heard his words.

"By my troth, sir, you're more than half right, I belave!" said the man.

"Who are you?" asked the lawyer, starting back.

"Tim O'Rourke is my name, sir; and I'll make bould to ax yer honour a question or two, beggin' yer honour's pardon for hearin' what you said, which I couldn't well help, for you spoke my own thoughts widin three fath of my ear."

"Well, O'Rourke, speak on, for I'm in a hurry," said the lawyer.

"I'll go a little ways from the house, if it plazes your honour; for I don't want the ould lady in there to see me spakin' wid yer honour. You see, she might be thinkin' I was tellin' yer honour more than she'd like to have you know."

The lawyer soon turned a corner, and then O'Rourke stopped and said:

"Now, yer honour, I'll be afther spakin'. Will yer honour be so good as to tell me if the ould gintleman's will is goin' to stand good, lavin' such a hape o' property to the widder and the wee bit of a babbie?"

"I don't see how the matter concerns you," replied the lawyer, rather in surprise.

"Faith, but it does, though," said O'Rourke. "The babbie they're passin' off at the house you left for the son of ould Martin is the child of meself and me wife! They hired us into desate, and it's misery we've been in ever since. But if the babbie is to be rich, we'll bear the misery for its sake."

Mr Hourly was completely speechless with surprise for a moment. At last, he asked:

"Do you speak the truth O'Rourke?"

"So help me God and all the howly saints ! I do ! I'll kiss the cross on that !" replied the man.

The lawyer's face turned blue. He thought of the money he had advanced. If this secret was known, the will would be crushed at once.

"This matter needs looking into, O'Rourke," said he, at last.

"I should think it did, yer honour."

"Come to my office at eight o'clock, to-night. Here is my card. You'll see where to come in."

"Yes, sir "

And O'Rourke went off, while the lawyer studied this new complication in the Martin case.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE sea was safely passed by Edgar Martin and his companions ; and under the guidance of Eliphalet Sawkins, he took up the route which had been followed by Mrs Peters and his unfortunate sister. Inquiries, as they passed through various French towns, satisfied Edgar that Eliphalet was guiding him correctly, for the droll Yankœ was well remembered wherever he had been.

A week of rapid travel brought the party into the near vicinity of the place where Mrs Peters had been robbed, and the scene of Mrs Armstrong's abduction. And Edgar and his brother-in-law soon learned that there was a strong likelihood of their meeting the brigands; for upon reaching a town within a few miles of the mountain which Eliphalet recognised as

that where he had met Ghibetti, they found it crowded with troops, who were gathering to go in search of the bandit chief.

Fearful that, if he waited for their action, the brigand would have fled far away to some unknown fastness, he hurried on with his companions, regardless of the warnings which he received from the villagers and others, that peril was before him. The troops were not to move till morning; he hoped to see the brigand before they moved.

It was almost night as the tired horses of the three travellers moved slowly up the mountain. When they arrived at the well-remembered spring where Mrs Peters had desired Eliphalet to fill her cup with water, the Yankee pointed it out.

"There's jest as sweet water as ever you put lip to, capting," said he. "I gave the women folks a drink here jest afore we met the brigands. It wasn't thirty rod from here where we met 'em. Will you stop to water?"

"No; if we are so near, let us push on!" said Edgar, nervously.

"Well, look to your weepsons, capting; they may begin a shootin' afore you know of it! If they do, they won't ketch me a nappin' this time!"

And Eliphalet rode on, with a large revolver in his right hand.

"I wish you'd put up your pistol in your belt, and not draw it without orders!" said Edgar, impatiently. "Remember that no weapons are to be used without there is an absolute necessity!"

"I don't see no harm in bein' ready," growled Eliphalet. But he put up his pistol. Scarcely had he done so, when a single person, armed with a carbine and a belt well stocked with pistols, stepped upon a rock which commanded a view of the road just before them, and, in very good English, cried out :

"Halt !"

"Creation ! It is the very man himself—that's the chief !" said Eliphalet to Edgar.

"Good !" cried young Martin to the Yankee. "Charley, you and Eliphalet remain here. I shall ride forward."

And he did so.

"Halt !" again cried the brigand, and he levelled his piece at the breast of the young American.

"If your name is Ghibetti, I have a line here under your own hand, granting a free passage to the bearer," said Edgar, still advancing.

"Halt !" thundered the brigand. "Halt ! or your passage to another world is taken and paid for."

Edgar saw that it was indeed time to stop ; for the carbine was at full cock, and the brigand's finger on the trigger. And as he stopped, an exclamation from Eliphalet caused him to look back, and he saw that a band of armed men had closed in behind them, and now another file appeared in front.

"Now, I will look at your pass from Ghibetti, if you will take the trouble to dismount," said the first speaker, descending from the rock and approaching Edgar.

Edgar handed him the paper which he had procured from Mrs Peters.

The brigand looked at it—then in a half contemptuous tone, said:

“I know not how you came in possession of that paper; but it was written to pass a lady and her two servants, not three armed men, whom I presume are spies sent to see what they can, and report to the carbineers, who seek to destroy us.”

“We are no spies,” said Edgar, indignantly, “And if you are Ghibetti—”

“I am Ghibetti. What want you of him?”

“That which I had rather tell him in some other place than on the highway. I come not as an enemy, without his answer to my demands makes me one.”

The chief eyed him closely.

“You are an American,” said he.

“Yes—thank God!” said Edgar.

“There are troops on the way to attack me, are there not?”

“Yes—they are in a village below, waiting for more men. They will not march till morning.”

“How many are they?”

“Full a thousand, I should say, and they expect five hundred more.”

“Quite an army, to hunt down a lone chief with a hundred or two followers at his back,” said the chief, bitterly. “Tell your companions to advance.”

Edgar did so, and the robber recognized Eliphalet at a glance.

"Have you come after your 'weepons' old man?" he asked, with a smile.

"I reckon that's a part of my errand here," said Eliphalet. "You see they belonged to my grandfather, who fit in the old Revolution, and I set a heap by 'em."

"You can visit my camp, Sir American, but I will not vouch for your leaving it safely," said Ghibetti now to Edgar. "If you have money or jewels with you, it were better for you that you gave them to my men and passed on—for then your lives would be in no further peril. Strangers who visit the hiding-places of robbers seldom leave them alive."

"I will run the risk," said Edgar. "I have money—that I care not for—you are welcome to it. But the jewel I seek is in your possession."

"I will not affect to misunderstand you," said the robber. "I saw at a glance that you were related to a lady who is in my charge; for the likeness between you is strong. But if you have come with a hope to gain her freedom, you need not go further."

"I have money for her ransom," said Edgar.

"Her weight in gold will not free her."

"Then, sir, if the lives of a brother and a husband will add to your merits take them, for I swear, and he has sworn, never to return without her."

"A husband? You speak falsely, sir—she is a widow."

"Not so, sir. She supposed her husband lost at sea; but he was saved, and is here to speak for himself. Charles Armstrong, sir, and my name is Edgar Martin."

The brigand stood thoughtfully a moment, then making a signal to a couple of his men, they advanced, and he said :

"Take these horses and their baggage to the cave below the cypress mound."

Then turning to Edgar, he said :

"If you choose to run the risk, you may venture to my den. But I give you no safeguard."

"We will ask none. We are in your power to a certain extent," said Edgar. "We mean fairly and kindly by you ; but if we must die, we will not die alone."

"I understand you," said Ghibetti, "and could have you disarmed if I chose ; but I do not. You can follow me."

He gave a signal, and the men who had closed up around them disappeared in an instant, and the chief, turning into the thickest of the forest, led them along the very path which Ellen Armstrong had once passed over.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE sun was setting in golden glory when Ghibetti, followed by the Americans, reached his encampment. From a small elevation to which he led them, they could look down upon the village where the troops were quartered, and also see various turns of the road along which they had travelled. They no longer wondered that the chief should have been so well posted as to who were on the road, and so well prepared to collect his tolls.

"You have a noble prospect here," said Edgar to the robber.

"Yes; a fine view with a telescope. I can count the blood-hounds who will be on my track to-morrow."

"You will not await them here, surely?" exclaimed Edgar.

"Why not? One may as well die here as elsewhere. Does not this look like a good battle-ground?"

"It is a good place for defence with men who are well acquainted with it," said Edgar. "But your foes will not number less than fifteen hundred, and they seem anxious to find you. A heavy reward is offered for your head, also for each man of your band who is captured or slain."

"I know it," said Ghibetti, gloomily. "It they number fifteen hundred when they commence their attack, they will count less ere it is finished. But come to my quarters—there you can partake of some refreshments, and then we will see what is best to be done about my captive. I had hoped to make her my wife; but, if she is a wife, that hope is passed."

And the robber passed along through his encampment in gloomy silence, followed by the Americans.

When Ghibetti reached the large pavilion which he inhabited, he rang a small bell, and a servant appeared from an inner apartment.

"Wine and fruit," said Ghibetti.

The servant disappeared, but returned in a few moments with a large tray laden with the articles ordered.

"Drink and eat, gentlemen—you look weary," said the robber, in a kind tone.

"Not half so weary as I am anxious to know if my sister is well," said Edgar.

"Sir, in mercy let me see my wife if she is here," said Armstrong.

The robber hesitated. It was but for a moment. His better nature was uppermost, and he said :

"If she will condescend to visit my pavilion, you shall see her. For I have spoken to her but once since she became my prisoner. She is with my sisters. I will call them, and request her to honour us with her company."

Though the chief spoke in this singular manner, Edgar could not conceive that he spoke truly. To have a prisoner in his power for whom he professed love, and not even to speak to her, seemed to him to be a stretch of generosity stronger than nature.

"Send Guilia to me," said Ghibetti to the servant who had brought the wine.

In a short time the beautiful Italian girl made her appearance.

"Think you that you could persuade the lady to come to my pavilion. For you know that I have vowed never to enter hers uninvited."

"I can try, brother. But she will think it strange to receive the request."

"Not if she sees this picture," said Edgar, taking a miniature from his bosom. "And is told that the owner of it is here."

"Take it to her, Guilia, and ask her to come. She will see those who are less repugnant to her than your poor brother, Ghibetti."

Armstrong and Edgar were faint with excitement, when the sound of voices and quick footsteps were heard. Edgar turned to the entrance of the pavilion, and with a wild, glad cry, his sister rushed into his arms.

She did not see her husband at that moment; but the next instant, Edgar, not thinking of the effect of such a sudden announcement, said:

"Charles is here, dear Ellen—save some of your kisses for him."

"Charles?" she exclaimed, wildly. "Charles! He is—"

Her eyes fell upon her long-mourned husband, and, with a wild scream, she fell senseless to the ground.

"My God! you have killed her," groaned Ghibetti.

"Joy never kills," said Edgar, as he raised her up, and applied some wine to her lips.

Slowly, consciousness came back to her.

"Did I dream," she murmured. "I thought I saw my husband."

"He is here, alive and well, dear Ellen," said Armstrong, in a low tone. "Your head is on his bosom."

Slowly, dreamily, she seemed to come to a knowledge of the fact that he was there—that Edgar, her brother, was there also.

Then her eyes fell upon Ghibetti, who, pale, but quiet, stood near with his arms folded across his broad chest.

"You were kind to let them come to me," she murmured. "You have even been generous and noble; and now you see why I could not love you."

Ghibetti sighed, but made no reply.

"Heaven will bless you for your goodness!" continued Ellen, "even as I bless you."

And she rose, and went and took his hand and kissed it.

"I deserve no thanks, lady," said the chief, sadly. "What I have done cannot be undone; but now you are free. I have but one favour to ask of you."

"I care not what it is, so that in honour I may grant it—it shall be done," she replied.

"To-morrow's sun will rise for me; but ere it sets Ghibetti will be no more. He has nothing left to live for now; and the bloodhounds who seek his life may have it when his arm is weary for its work. All that I ask is, when all is over, take my sisters with you to your own free and glorious land, and there treat them not as the sisters of a robber, but of one who loved you too well for his own bless. To-night, you and them, with these gentlemen, will be conveyed to a place of safety. If I do not come to you before another sun goes down, I shall be dead!"

Guilia and Lucia wept, and besought their brother not to bid them leave him. But he kissed them tenderly, and said:

"Be ready by midnight. Then I will come to see you all, and drink a farewell cup with you. Perchance I may outlive the morrow; if I do, I will join you."

The sisters could say no more, and, at the command of their brother, they conducted the Americans all to the other pavilion, and prepared refreshments for them.

Here Mrs Armstrong saw and recognised Eliphalet, who had kept himself in the background before.

"You guided my brother and my husband here—I know you did!" she cried, as she grasped his rough hand. "How can I ever repay you?"

"Don't say nothin' about pay, Miss Armstrong!" cried Eliphalet. "I feel so 'nation glad, I could dance a jig if I had music. I was afeard I'd find you dead and buried."

"Far from it. I have been treated honourably and nobly, and these sweet girls have been loving sisters to me. But, Charles—Charles, how was it that I heard you were dead?"

"It is a long story, dear Ellen; I will tell you of my shipwreck and my sufferings at another time, when we are on our way to our own native land. Now, I cannot; for my heart is too full of joy to look upon a sad past."

"How did you know where I was?"

"Through Mrs Peters, and our good friend Eliphalet."

"Again and again I thank you, Mr Sawkins!" cried the happy wife.

CHAPTER LV.

It was midnight when Ghibetti entered the pavilion where his sisters were with their guests.

"I have come as I promised," said he. "I have come to bid you all farewell, in case evil befalls me on the morrow. If not, you will see me to-morrow night in the place to which you will now be conducted."

"Heaven grant we may!" said Ellen; and her wish was echoed by the rest.

"Heaven is not expected to favour such a sinner as myself," said Ghibetti, with a sad smile. "Nevertheless, I thank you for your good wishes; and, should my day close in darkness to-morrow, I pray you to remember my last request, and let not my sisters feel that they are utterly alone on the earth. They have wealth enough in gold and jewels; but the treasures of a kingdom are worthless, even as life is, to those who are unloved."

Tears filled Ellen's eyes as she heard him speak so sadly. Had she not loved before, her heart could not have withstood the pity which she felt.

"I will be a fond and loving sister to them, as they have been to me," she said.

"Thanks, kind lady—thanks! My heart will beat the lighter for your words when I meet my foes to-morrow. And now, gentlemen, I will pledge you in a cup of wine, and then we must part. Your conductors wait for you as soon as I leave you. You will see or hear from me ere this hour to-morrow night."

Sadly for it was a parting glass—the gentlemen pledged the brave chief. Then, with a kiss and a word of love for each of his weeping sisters, and a grasp of the hand for each of his guests, Ghibetti left them.

CHAPTER LVI.

ALTHOUGH it was but little past midnight when the sisters of Ghibetti and the party of Ameri-

cans left the pavilion which for so long a time had been the habitation of Mrs. Armstrong, the day was just dawning when they entered the grand but gloomy hiding-place which had been selected for their temporary retreat.

Here Edgar not only found the horses belonging to his own party, but others, with side saddles, ready for the use of the ladies. As soon as they were within one of the large vaults of the cavern, the men who had conducted them hither built fires to take away the chilly dampness, and at them began to prepare food for a morning meal.

Edgar then turned to his sister, who had seated herself upon one of the many bales of goods which were scattered around, and near one already occupied as a seat by her husband.

"Have you time to answer me a question or two about home now, brother?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied. "But first tell me, dear sister, if you have ever seen a lovelier face than this?"

And he handed her a miniature which he constantly wore next to his heart.

CHAPTER LVII.

"SHE is beautiful! Who is it, brother?" asked Mrs. Armstrong.

"Her name, now, is Lizzie Grossbeak," he answered. "But if we return in safety to New York, I hope to call her Lizzie Martin."

"Lizzie Grossbeak!" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong, with a nervous start.

"Yes. Do you know her?"

"Does she live in Bleecker Street? Is she a daughter of Martin Grossbeak?"

"Yes. Why do you ask? And what excites you so? If you know her, you must love her. But I never heard her say that she had seen you."

"It is not likely that she has. But she has seen, if they live—sees every day—those who are dearer to me than life."

"Sister! What do you mean?"

And Edgar now looked surprised.

"If you visited there you must have heard of the two infants who were left to the care and charity of Mr Grossbeak until their own wretched mother could come to reclaim them."

"Yes; the twins! I saw the dear little pets a dozen times. Lizzie and her father almost worship them."

"Edgar, they are mine."

"Well, wonder upon wonders!" exclaimed Edgar. "Little did I think I kissed my own niece and nephew when I kissed Lizzie's pets."

"You have not told me how our father is, Edgar," said his sister.

Edgar hardly knew what to say. He feared to shock her by telling her of her father's fate, yet he knew that in time she would know it.

Mrs Armstrong saw his hesitation in replying.

"He is sick, Edgar? Tell me; for, cruel as he was to me, I do not forget that he was and is my father. It was the woman that he married, not he, who drove me from my home."

"He was not sick when I left New York," said Edgar, dreading to tell the truth to his sister.

"Did he know where I was?"

"No; he did not, Ellen. But I see the men there are setting our breakfast. Are you not hungry as well as tired?"

"No, brother. I am too happy in seeing you and Charles, and hearing from my babies, to think of food now. It seems to me as if I could live on joy now, I have 'supped sorrow' so long."

CHAPTER LVIII.

DAY dawned upon the glittering arms of Ghibetti and all of his desperate band, except the few whom he had sent with his sisters and Edgar Martin's party. For his night had been sleepless; and ere the first rays of the sun had reddened the verge of the eastern sky, his bugle had sounded the "assembly call."

There was sadness mingled with pride in his look as he glanced along their lines as they drew up in proper formation before him. He seemed to feel that a battle must result hopelessly for him, though he could make it bloody and disastrous to his foes. His men were well armed and munitioned, and so used to victory under his leadership, that no one of them seemed to think of defeat now.

So it ever is with men. With a leader whose skill and success hath ever kept them from defeat, they feel themselves invulnerable, and a handful will not turn their backs upon thousands. The leader is a host in himself.

After carefully inspecting his men, and observing that not one pale face, not one faint

heart was there—that all were cheerful and ready—Ghibetti bade them breakfast, and to eat heartily and drink freely of their light but nutritious wine; for a busy day was before them, and it was not likely that they would be allowed much time for refreshments after the troops had scaled the heights of the mountain.

After eating a few mouthfuls, and drinking a cup or two of wine, Ghibetti took his telescope and ascended a point which overlooked the valley below, from which he could see the mustering bloodhounds who were upon his track. He was armed not only with his usual weapons, but also with those which Eliphalet Sawkins had given him, and well knew the use of the weapons which he bore.

The sun had now risen, and while its golden glow fell warm upon the mountain-tops, it only just began to steal along the lower hills, and to tip the tree-tops in the valley. Ghibetti could see the hurrying to and fro of horsemen and the glitter of arms down in the village below, and knew that it would not be long ere the dance of death would open. After his men had taken food, he made his arrangements to meet the attack. Flying parties of riflemen were sent far down the mountain, with orders to harass the advance of the troops as much as possible, but as they advanced, to fall back, firing at every chance.

At each point on the road where his men could, from sheltering rocks and thickets, pour in a volley and then retreat unharmed, he posted detachments, thus preparing to make them pay dearly for the advantage before they gained his

encampment, from which everything of value had been carried to places of concealment. Lead and steel would be the booty of his foes that day.

While he was watching the mustering forces below, he heard the rolling of distant thunder, and casting his eyes westward, he saw that a bank of heavy black clouds was rising in that direction—saw it, too, with satisfaction.

“We shall have a storm!” he muttered. “It will dampen their ardour and their powder at the same time. The paths will be slippery with water before they are with blood.”

The troops were now in motion. Their advance guard had left the village.

Ghibetti glanced back at the black shadows growing up chill and threatening in the west, and smiled as he said :

“Bad as my cause is, Heaven seems to favour me to-day.”

Once in motion, the carbineers moved swiftly up the mountain-road. Soon Ghibetti began to see the little puffs of white smoke far below, which told that his scouts were doing their duty. And he smiled grimly when for each little puff of white higher up, he saw a cloud rise below. The troops were firing volleys for single shots.

“Powder will be worth more before night !” he said, with a laugh

The small jets of smoke came higher and higher, and ere an hour was passed, the sound of the firing reached his ears plainly. By it he could tell that his advanced detachments were doing their duty splendidly

But now a higher Power opened his artillery.

The storm, which gathering behind the mountains had been unobserved by the troops until long after they had left all shelter behind, now burst forth in fearful fury.

Down the mountain rolled the storm, hushing in its wild turmoil all other sounds. Ghibetti knew well that his men, used to the forest, knowing every cleft and shelter in the rocks, would quickly secure themselves from its pitiless peltings, while their enemies would mostly have to stand its drenching. And he retired with his reserve forces to the shelter of his tents, well knowing that they were safe from attack until the fury of the storm would pass.

For full two hours the thunder echoed from crag to crag, and the rain fell in torrents. Then, as suddenly as it came, the storm cleared away, and the sun shone out clear and gloriously. But for a considerable time there was silence below. The ardour and the powder of the troops had indeed been dampened. For nearly an hour, only the caroling of the birds fell on Ghibetti's ear. But then the sound of firing recommenced, and he knew that the troops were advancing. Slowly, too, for they had many a swollen mountain torrent to pass, and their road was wet and slippery. But on they came, gaining ground steadily if slowly.

Noon passed before the tired scouts and advanced guard of the brigands fell back upon their reserve, announcing the near approach of the carbineers.

Ghibetti bade them refresh themselves and rest for the final struggle, while he led those forward who as yet had done nothing.

Now the troops came on, and finding that they were near the spot where the brigands would make their last stand, their shouts and shots came loud and fast. Their yells were not replied to by the brigands, but their shots were echoed, and from behind every rock and tree came the death-dealing bullets. Men fell wounded or slain on every side, and their numbers alone kept up the courage of the carbineers. The traitors had told them how few the brigands were, and they were literally ashamed to be beaten by a tenth of their number.

Ghibetti now freely and boldly exposed himself, and for the first time the Papal troops during that conflict had a chance to cross steel with their opponents. For hours they were kept in check before they reached the encampment of the brigands. But at last they did so, when Ghibetti himself, wounded in several places, could not count thirty of his men around him.

These he posted so as to receive the final charge of the troops in the most deadly manner; and as their ammunition was almost gone, he bade them, after firing one volley more, waiting until their foes were almost at the muzzles of their guns, then to scatter and save themselves as best they could.

As yet he had not used the present of Eliphalet, and he knew that a dozen of his foes would fall before his revolvers if his arm was not unnerved by his death before he could use them.

The carbineers, seeing that they were in the encampment, made a last and final rush upon the handful of men who yet opposed them.

One deadly volley, and while many of the troops lay writhing in the death agony, the bandits disappeared as if by magic.

One alone seemed to disdain to fly. Ghibetti, standing in a narrow pass to which he had retreated, shouted to them to come and take the head for which such a vast reward had been offered.

Several of the boldest rushed on, for it had been ordered to take him alive if possible. It was desired that he should meet death at the executioner's hands, and publicly, so that the people might know that he was dead; for he had been reported killed a great many times, and yet so often falsely, that the common people believed him possessed of a charmed life.

Those who rushed forward did so to death. With a steady and unswerving aim he sent a bullet to the heart of each who approached him. The officers, seeing that he could not be conquered alive, ordered their men to fire on him; but when their guns were raised, he too was gone. He had covered the retreat of the survivors of his band, and now the carbineers sought in vain to find him or a living foe, except a few who were wounded and dying. Their day's work was over; the brigands had been scattered and defeated, but Ghibetti had escaped. That he was wounded they well knew, for his clothes were seen to be crimsoned with blood—how badly, however, they knew not. Night was now almost upon them, and they could not search in the darkness amid the clefts and pitchy ravines and dangerous precipices around them.

CHAPTER LIX.

THAT was a fearfully weary and anxious day for the two sisters of Ghibetti. The rest of the party were anxious, but they had more to talk about, more to think of, than the two poor girls who knew that their well-loved even if erring brother was struggling against such fearful odds. They had rejoiced while the storm lasted, for they knew well how great an advantage it would give him over his foes. And when it was over, they sorrowed, for they knew that he must be engaged.

It was a long day, but it passed, and night was upon them. None of the party could sleep, and until near midnight they sat around the fire which partially lighted up the room of the cavern.

At that hour a sound of alarm was heard from the guard who had been stationed at the entrance of the cavern. The whole party started to their feet, and Lucia uttered screams of joy as she saw the form of her brother.

Staggering, evidently from weakness, he came forward, but reeled and fell before he even reached the outstretched sisterly arms which flew to meet him.

"I am here. They have not got Ghibetti's head to carry back with them!" he muttered, with a wild and hollow laugh, as Edgar and Armstrong lifted him up and bore him to a seat near the fire.

"You are wounded!" cried Edgar.

"Yes, to the death. But it matters not. My strength lasted to bring me here. I care not for death now."

"You may live; let us look to your wounds."

"It is useless. I am choking with internal bleeding. I know that my race is run. I can die happy now; all that I love on earth are here."

And the dying bandit looked upon his silent but tearful sisters, and then on Ellen Armstrong. So near death's kingdom—it was no harm to look love in his dying glances.

"Bless you, lady," he said. "Remember your promise to take my sisters to your native land."

"I will, I will! My home shall be theirs always."

And Ellen wept freely as she spoke.

"Take my private treasures with you, sisters," said Ghibetti. Then beckoning to one of his men, he called him by name.

"Andres," said he, "you will see this party and my sisters safely into France. Then return and divide all the treasure of the band equally among the band whom the accursed carbineers have not slain. My billet is made out—my work is done."

The man bowed his head to signify that the order should be obeyed; but he was silent. The tears which rolled down his scarred cheeks told how much he felt. There is a grief which words can never utter.

Again the eye of Ghibetti wandered over the forms of the party. His sisters knelt by his side, and he clasped a hand of each in his cold, cold palms. His eyes wandered from face to face until they rested upon the face of Mrs

Armstrong. Then they grew fixed, while a smile, bright as the last gleam of the setting sun, shone out on the pallor of his death-stricken face.

"Bless you!" he murmured. "Bless you."

His lips moved no more. His eyes did not turn away, but they grew more and more dim, and froze into death looking at her.

CHAPTER LX.

"**FATHER**—father! the Havre packet has arrived!" cried Lizzie Grossbeak, as she rushed into the room where he sat smoking. "I have been down town shopping, and I told our coachman to drive down to the battery, so that I could look out on the bay. He did so; and while I was there a vessel, crowded with passengers, was coming up, and the people around said it was the Havre packet."

"Well, child—what of it?"

And Mr Grossbeak smoked on with provoking coolness.

"Why, do you not think that Edgar—I mean Captain Martin and his sister—will be on board?"

"Perhaps so, child. If they are, we will soon hear from them. But what puts you so out of breath, pet?"

"Because, when I got out of the carriage, I ran into the house and hurried up stairs to tell you. I do hope they have come!"

"Captain Martin will not be dilatory in re-

porting himself here, I guess," said the old merchant with a smile; "that is, if he came in the packet."

A servant entered, and announced that Captain Martin, with a gentleman and several ladies, had just arrived.

"I said so," said the merchant; while Lizzie turned alternately red and pale.

"I wonder what ladies besides his sister are with him?" said Lizzie, half pouting.

"We had better go and see, pet," said her father, rising and hurrying down to the reception-room.

"How are you, Edgar?—how are you, my dear boy?" he cried, as he entered the room, closely followed by his daughter.

And he grasped Edgar warmly by the hand.

"I am well and hearty, sir. Here is my sister and her husband; also, two young Italian friends, whom I know you and Lizzie will welcome, when I tell you that they are orphans and strangers in America."

"Bless them, yes! I am glad to see you all. Lizzie, stir around, and make our guests feel at home."

Lizzie advanced timidly, and when Edgar formally introduced his sister, she kissed her warmly, and did the same to poor Guilia and Lucia, who had seen her portrait often enough to have recognised her had they met her on the street; for Edgar made no secret of his love, and had often spoke of her on their voyage over the Atlantic.

This innocent and natural, this womanly

welcome, did more to make those poor girls feel at home than a thousand of the pharisaical and set expressions which fashion and worldliness would have uttered. They felt that in the beautiful heart-choice of Edgar they had found a friend whom they could love. The world would not be all dark where such as she dwelt.

After the first salutations were over, Edgar, who noticed the nervous uneasiness of his sister, smiled and said :

"I know what you want, Ellen. Mr Grossbeak, you and Lizzie will have to give up your pet babies. There is a claimant for them."

"A claimant?" exclaimed Mr Grossbeak.

"Yes; their mother."

"It is your sister!" said Lizzie, glancing at her. "The boy looks like her. I will bring them in a moment."

And she bounded out of the room, while Ellen Armstrong trembled with eagerness to clasp the dear ones to her heart.

"It is not a very long story, and I will tell it all to you by-and-by," said Edgar, to Mr Grossbeak, who was almost speechless from surprise.

"I hate to loose my little darlings, but a parent's claim is stronger than mine," he answered.

The next instant Lizzie came in, followed by the nurse, who carried the lovely twins, one on each arm.

With tears of joy rolling down her cheeks, the mother clasped them to her bosom and kissed them over and over. The father took the next turn, and then they went the rounds. If

they had been sugar, all the sweetness would have been kissed out of them, then and there.

Babies get used to kissing, I suppose, and the twins had had so much of it that they stood it very well on this occasion, and laughed and crowed as if it was something nice.

Mr Grossbeak ordered in cake and wine, and then told Lizzie to take the ladies to chambers where they could dress for dinner; for he was determined they should be permanent guests in the old mansion.

CHAPTER LXI.

"WELL, thank the blessed stars, the matter will soon be settled now!" exclaimed Mrs Desha, as with her daughter she accompanied Mr Hourly to the court-room where the will-case was to be heard.

The lawyer felt uneasy, but he did not express his fears; he only hoped that he might so far succeed as to be sure of recovering the money he had advanced, and to secure the enormous fee which had been promised him if he succeeded in establishing the will.

The court having opened in due form, Mr Hourly rose and caused the will to be read; and then glancing at Mr Graham, who, with Edgar Martin and his sister by his side, sat ready to oppose its reception, said that he was ready to listen to anything that the opposing counsel had to say in the matter. He supposed, he said, that insanity would be made a plea of objection

against the testator; but he was well provided with witnesses to crush out the argument.

"We shall base our opposition upon no such grounds!" said Mr Graham, quietly. "We hold that the will was obtained by fraud—by a base conspiracy! That the woman who sits there by Mr Hourly's side, with a widow's weeds upon her, and the infant of other parents in her arms, never was the legal wife of Levi Martin; that aided and counselled by her mother, whose true name is Moll Miller and not Mrs Desha, she, the wife of Edward Bracket, of Arkansas, committed bigamy by wedding Mr Martin, and—"

The wild scream of Mrs Martin, and a fiend-like cry of rage from her mother, interrupted the lawyer. The truth was too strong for them. The youngest lady fainted. Her mother hurriedly poured out a glass of water from a pitcher on the table, and placed it to her lips.

"Let us go from here," exclaimed the eldest widow. "This is no place for justice now."

"It is the very and the only place for justice!" thundered Mr Graham. "I hope the court will order both of these women into custody. A yet more serious charge will be substantiated against Mrs Miller after the will-case is decided. That of murder! Now, I will call Mr Bracket to prove my first statement."

"All is lost!" moaned Mrs Martin, as she heard this.

"Yes—curse him, yes!" said her mother; and she swallowed the remainder of the glass of water which she had placed to the lips of her

daughter, to aid in restoring her to consciousness.

"Edward Bracket will take the stand," said Mr Graham.

And pale and thin from long confinement to his bed, the man whom Edgar Martin had saved from death in the harbour, entered the witness-stand.

As he did so, and glanced at his wife, she was seized with convulsions.

"You all think you have triumphed over a couple of women," said Mrs Desha, bitterly. "You think you have prison-cells or worse for them. But they defy you. In ten minutes we will be for ever beyond your power. Devils, laugh—laugh! There was enough strychnine in that tumbler to have killed all that stand staring at us like so many fools."

She exhibited signs of the poison herself before she had finished speaking.

Let me draw a veil over the horrors of death in that court-room. The two women who had entered it alive, hoping for the successful consummation of all their villanous conspiracy, were carried away cold and stiffened corpses.

CHAPTER LXII.

Our last scene, like the first, occurs in the dear and quaint old Grossbeak Mansion. Brilliantly lighted, decked with flowers, with sweet and joyous music floating through its lofty apartments, it was filled with happy guests, all bidden to a wedding festival.

For Edgar Martin now could call Lizzie his own for ever. That morning the sacred walls of "Trinity" had echoed the vows which bound them to each other in the holy link of matrimony.

There had been no occasion after the suicides in the court-room, to adjudge the will-case—the removal to another world of the claimant settled all. A mere formality of the court made the rightful heirs safe in their inheritance.

Mr Grossbeak seemed perfectly happy in the presence of those whom he loved. He had bargained with Charles and Ellen Armstrong to become permanent guests, so that he might not lose sight of the babies, and Ellen had persuaded the sisters of Ghibetti, with the aid of Lizzie, to remain there also. Thenceforward that mansion was the happiest abode in all the great city. Even our friend Eliphalet was induced to accept the post of butler to the united household, and having safely brought home his cherished relics of the Revolution, he settled down without a desire to travel again.

Ned Bracket, who had been robbed and nearly killed by Bob Blenners, had the satisfaction of seeing that gentleman sent to Sing Sing for a term longer than he was likely to live. Edgar kindly let him have all the money that was recovered; for, though rough and wicked, he had been grateful for the service rendered to him by the young captain, and had given the information which foiled the wicked woman and her daughter.

Mr Hourly yet mourns the loss of all his

advances, and picks up a precarious living about the Tombs; for he lost all caste after the exposure in the will case. Though there was no proof that he was a party in the conspiracy, still suspicion said he was, and morally it killed him and his prospects.

The gifted Graham has since gone to that bar where all in time must appear, and my story has come to an end.

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